VOGUE

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"I WAS NOT OKAY"
CARA DELEVINGNE
STARTS OVER

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FASHION'S SHOW OF STRENGTH

DEMNA ON THE RECORD
THE DESIGNER ON HIS PATH FORWARD

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VOGUE

April 2023

LA VIE EN ROUGE
MODEL AMÉRICA GONZÁLEZ WEARS A BOTTER DRESS. AGMES EARRING. PHOTOGRAPHED BY NADINE IJEWERE.

BEAUTY NOTE
GO BEYOND GLOSS. GUCCI ROUGE DE BEAUTÉ BRILLANT GLOW & CARE LIPSTICK IN 517 ABBIE MAROON RED HAS A SHEER-MEETS-SATIN FINISH THAT PLAYS WELL ON CHEEKS, TOO.

24
Editor's Letter

32
Contributors

34
When Stars Collide
Sam Mendes's thrilling return to theater. By Hayley Maitland

46
Smooth Operator
Chloe Malle test-drives a new generation of retinol formulas

52
Flemish Masters
Sarah Harris tries classic Belgian tailoring on for size

60
Book It
The best new reads

66
Looking Both Ways
A new exhibition mines Condé Nast's glorious archive

68
Lip Service
Makeup artist Fara Homidi makes her product debut

70
Begin Again
Cara Delevingne reckons with a life lived close to the edge. By Chioma Nnadi

80
Practically Perfect
A hardworking wardrobe never looked so good

92
Frida's World
Architect Frida Escobedo is modernizing The Met. By Dodie Kazanjian

96
Truth and Consequences
Ben Platt and Micaela Diamond star in the Broadway revival of *Parade.* By Leslie Camhi

100
Demna on the Record
The Balenciaga artistic director on moving the brand forward

104
Show of Strength
Kendall Jenner bares arms, while Ada Calhoun considers what her own have held

110
Eternal Sunshine
Head off the beaten path in spring's best looks

120
Just One Thing
A Gucci blazer to go from off-duty to black-tie and back

126
The Get
A little everyday extra

132
Last Look

Cover Look The Phoenix

Cara Delevingne wears a Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello jacket. Levi's SecondHand jeans. Church's shoes. Tiffany & Co. earring. To get this look, try: Dior Forever Skin Glow Foundation in 1W, Rouge Blush in 459 Charnelle, 5 Couleurs Couture Eyeshadow in 499 Bronze Sepia, Diorshow On Set Brow Gel in 03 Brown, and Dior Addict Lip Glow Balm in 012 Rosewood. All by Dior Beauty. Hair, Tamara McNaughton; makeup, Romy Soleimani. Details, see In This Issue.
Photographer: Annie Leibovitz.
Fashion Editor: Jorden Bickham.

FASHION EDITOR: GABRIELLA KAREFA-JOHNSON. HAIR, JOEY GEORGE; MAKEUP, YUMI LEE. PHOTOGRAPHED AT EAST WINDS COVE, PORT ANTONIO, PORTLAND, JAMAICA. PRODUCED BY MAXINE WALTERS, WALTERS PRODUCTIONS. DETAILS, SEE IN THIS ISSUE.

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Letter From the Editor

HIGH STAKES
CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: CARA DELEVINGNE IN MAISON MARGIELA, PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ; MICAELA DIAMOND, IN CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS, AND BEN PLATT, PHOTOGRAPHED BY NORMAN JEAN ROY; DESIGNER DEMNA FITS A BALENCIAGA COUTURE OPERA COAT ON MODEL ANANIA ORGEAS IN 2021.

Opening Up

TO EVERY SEASON, ITS MOOD. Ours this month is serious—with stories on substance abuse and mental health, intolerance and antisemitism, and the terrible specter of sexual exploitation of minors. Taken together it can seem like a lot for a single issue, but we believe in using our platform to spark discussion and draw attention to subjects that need our thought and focus. Cara Delevingne is a model of openness—that's why she wanted to speak about how she finds herself, at 30, in a moment of intense self-reflection. Cara has always been such a light in the fashion industry and in the culture at large, someone whose charisma is unmistakable and who has been candid about her struggles with mental health. To *Vogue*'s Chioma Nnadi, who spoke with her several times in the course of writing our cover profile, photographed by Annie Leibovitz, Cara was brave and honest about her efforts to work on herself and get healthy. At the time of her conversations with Chioma, she was looking ahead, thinking about motherhood and striking a balance between building her career and the far more important work of building and supporting a strong sense of self.

Such moments can be tentative. Nevertheless, it's worthwhile to mark them and acknowledge that we all need support, to talk about what we're going through—and to admit our mistakes. That is why we invited the designer Demna to give an on-the-record interview about the controversy that engulfed Balenciaga last fall. Demna fully admits that he made an error in judgment with a creative campaign that cast children in adult tableaux, and told us that another campaign that included alarming props was the result of negligence and "coincidences." Whether his apologies will satisfy those, especially on social media, who believe Demna's instinct for provocation led him toward exploitation, I hear in his words a genuine sense of self-awareness and reconsideration, and I value the opportunity to let him speak in such a personal way.

More openness to talk, not less, is what the culture needs. No stage production encourages richer debate than the revival of the 1998 musical *Parade,* which had a brief run at New York's City Center last fall and is now arriving on Broadway. It stars a brilliant Ben Platt as Leo Frank, a real-life Jewish factory superintendent in early-20th-century Atlanta who was accused of murder and lynched by a mob when his sentence was commuted. The amazing Micaela Diamond plays his wife, Lucille (both actors have been photographed by Norman Jean Roy for us this month). American antisemitism, past and present, is a heady theme for a musical—and an all too relevant one at this moment in which reports of attacks and other troubling incidents are emerging around the country—but *Parade* is incredible, and represents a real moment for Ben, who brought a struggling teen to life so memorably in the musical *Dear Evan Hansen. Parade* is an equally significant role for him—and a more grown-up one—and he inhabits it with depth and urgency. As he tells the writer Leslie Camhi, "It's a story that's important to tell, and there's a real reason to do it now."

TOP LEFT: FASHION EDITOR: JORDEN BICKHAM. HAIR, TAMARA MCNAUGHTON; MAKEUP, ROMY SOLEIMANI. PHOTOGRAPHED AT SANDSTONE, SEMLER FAMILY RANCH. SET DESIGN: MARY HOWARD STUDIO. TOP RIGHT: FASHION EDITOR: MAX ORTEGA. HAIR, ILKER AKYOL; MAKEUP, KUMA. GROOMING, MELISSA DEZARATE. PRODUCED BY THE CANVAS AGENCY. BOTTOM: ANTON CORBIJN, *VOGUE*, SEPTEMBER 2021. DETAILS, SEE IN THIS ISSUE.

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New Directions

For “Frida’s World” (page 92), *Vogue* contributing editor Dodie Kazanjian spoke to Frida Escobedo, the Mexico City–born architect reimagining the modern and contemporary galleries of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Contributing fashion editor Max Ortega—a proud Mexican compatriot—and photographer Clément Pascal created the portraits that accompany the story, embracing views of the museum hidden from the casual visitor. They got the shot above, for instance, “in the structure above the European paintings galleries’ glass ceiling, under the skylights,” Pascal says. “It’s always one of my favorite parts of the job, having access to all those restricted places and being able to create something beautiful there.” So, too, did the shoot let Escobedo play with the way that she was seen. “She usually dresses all in black,” Ortega says, but, introduced to *Vogue*’s colorful closet, “she had so much fun experimenting.”

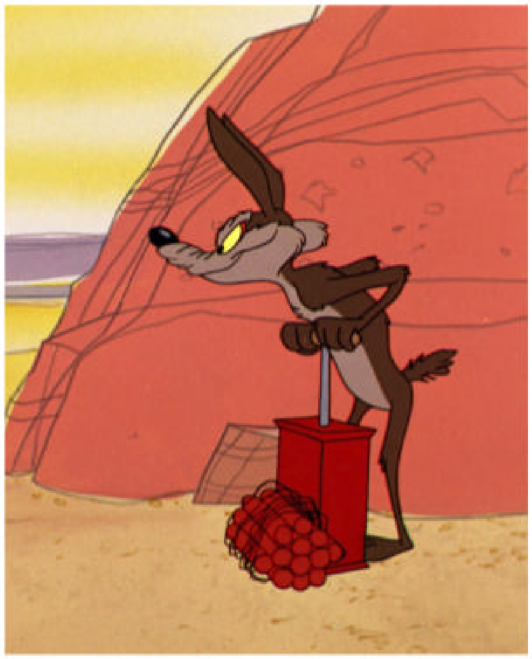
Seeing Things

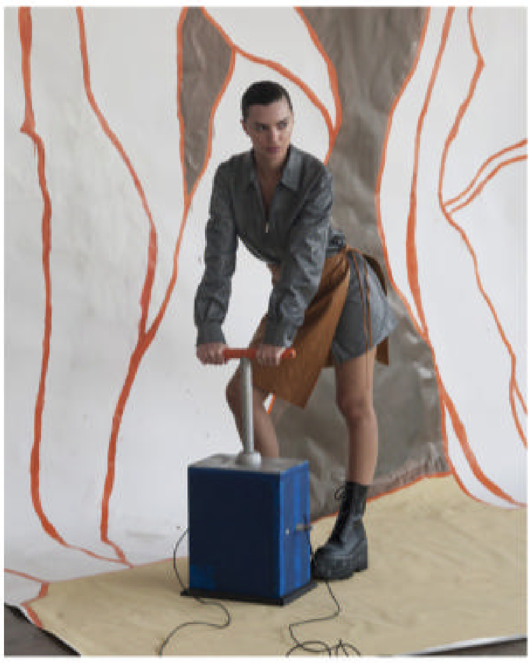
Rife with seductive shapes and vivid color, “Eternal Sunshine” (page 110) took global fashion editor at large Gabriella Karefa-Johnson and photographer Nadine Ijewere—along with models América González, Kai Newman, and Akon Changkou (seen above)—over to Port Antonio, Jamaica. There, the swaying palms and salty surf framed clothing inspired by another kind of trip. “The psychedelic prints I saw on the runway felt like a reflection of the way in which psychotropics are healing our minds,” explains Karefa-Johnson. “It was about seeing the world differently, communing with nature and plant medicine, and finding your own peace.”

ESCOBEDO: PRODUCED BY 2DM PRODUCTION. TOP RIGHT: PRODUCED BY MAXINE WALTERS, WALTERS PRODUCTIONS. WILE E. COYOTE: COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. ANIMATION. BOTTOM RIGHT: PRODUCED BY AP STUDIO, INC. SET DESIGN: PETER KLEIN. DETAILS, SEE IN THIS ISSUE.

A Little Looney

Functional, but make it fashion—that was pretty much the brief for “Practically Perfect” (page 80), styled by contributing editor Alex Harrington and photographed by Nigel Shafran. At a studio space in Long Island City, Queens, they put model Emily Ratajkowski to work in trench coats, hoodies, combat boots, and other utilitarian staples from the likes of Miu Miu and Junya Watanabe. Shafran, known for his off-the-wall imagination—“I’ll suddenly stop somewhere on my bike and draw a picture of a woman holding 20 packets of crisps,” he said recently—looked this time to Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner as spirited points of reference. Talk about having fun on the job.





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LIZ AND DICK

Johnny Flynn, who plays Richard Burton in *The Motive and the Cue,* wears a John Smedley cardigan. Tuppence Middleton, who will embody Elizabeth Taylor, wears a Max Mara coat. Photographed by Willow Williams.

When Stars Collide

Sam Mendes's return to London's National Theatre promises a thrilling showdown between Old Hollywood legends. Hayley Maitland meets the cast.

When, one night in Manhattan, 1964, Truman Capote accepted a ride in Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor's limousine after the theater, the author wasn't prepared to find himself at the center of a mob scene. "Damp, ghostly faces were flattened against the car's windows," he wrote. "The whole scene was like a stilled avalanche nothing could budge." The crowds would gather the following evening, and the one after that, too; Burton, fresh from starring alongside Taylor in *Cleopatra,* had signed on to play *Hamlet* for 17 weeks on Broadway, and pandemonium raged outside the Midtown theater.

It's this fraught Shakespeare production—led by Burton, directed by West End titan John Gielgud, and underwritten by Taylor's tangential involvement—that has inspired director Sam Mendes's *The Motive and the Cue,* opening at the Lyttelton Theatre in London this spring. It marks the Oscar winner's first return to the stage since 2018's *The Lehman Trilogy.*

"For me, *The Motive and the Cue* tries to find answers to three questions," Mendes reflects. "Why would the era's biggest movie star—Richard Burton—want to spend his honeymoon playing a role which has already been played by thousands of actors, while his new wife—Elizabeth Taylor—sits in a hotel room waiting for him to return? Why do we go back to these plays over and over, and what is the point of classical theater at all? What goes on in a rehearsal room when you make theater, and—if there is conflict—is that really such a bad thing?"

Penned by Tony winner Jack Thorne, *Motive* reexamines the forces that made Burton's *Hamlet* both a commercial triumph (with more than 200,000 tickets sold over a record-setting 136 performances) and an interpersonal disaster. In truth, the chaos had nothing on the tumult backstage: Burton clashed bitterly with Gielgud over the staging

>42

FASHION EDITOR: JESSICA GERARDI. HAIR, MARK FRANCOME PAINTER; MAKEUP, VERITY CUMMING. PRODUCED BY DIANA EASTMAN. SET DESIGN: JOSH STOVELL. DETAILS, SEE IN THIS ISSUE.

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ahead of opening night, with Taylor acting as go-between. Burton "wanted to be thought of as [being] in the line of great actors like Gielgud," explains Johnny Flynn, who stars as the actor. "He's hoping that by working with Sir John, he'll become [like] that, but he's instinctively not. He's kind of like a wild animal, really."

We meet on set for the cast's *Vogue* shoot in a North London studio, where production is running behind schedule (although not to a Taylor-like degree: The actor would, as Burton once lamented, be "late for the Last bloody Judgment"). Flynn, by contrast, is calm, quiet, and introspective—reclining peacefully on a leather sofa next to Tuppence Middleton, set to play Taylor, and Mark Gatiss, the production's campy, energetic Gielgud.

We've stolen 40 minutes between portraits, and the rehearsal-like atmosphere—everyone in monochrome, studio lights, Colorama scrolls—is fitting. Gielgud staged his *Hamlet* as if it were a final run-through, without elaborate costumes, props, or backdrops: "quite a modern idea at the time," as Flynn notes, and something Mendes will reference in his staging.

Despite being known for his work onscreen—including a turn as Mr. Knightley opposite Anya Taylor-Joy in 2020's *Emma*—Flynn is thoroughly embedded in the world of London theater. His late father, an actor, used to play cricket with Mendes, while his wife, Beatrice Minns, is a designer for immersive drama company Punchdrunk.

Like Burton in '64, the 40-year-old's star is in the ascendant. Last year, Flynn wrapped more than eight months of "rolling around Naples, the Amalfi, and Rome" to shoot *Ripley,* Oscar-winner Steven Zaillian's eight-part adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's five Tom Ripley novels, in which he stars as Dickie Greenleaf. "It's a bit darker, a bit more wintry, than the 1999 film," he teases of his outing as the toy-boy heir opposite Dakota Fanning and Andrew Scott.

Burton seems to be the sybarite Flynn is more excited to bring to life. Whether the same could have been said for Burton is up for debate. Less than a month before opening night in New York City, he married Taylor in a private suite at the Ritz-Carlton in Montreal, Taylor pinning an emerald-and-diamond Bulgari brooch to her buttercup dress. The public's fascination with the couple was at a fever pitch.

Inevitably, when rehearsals for *Hamlet* began, the level of intrigue among the cast rivaled that of the Danish court. The production's Guildenstern, William Redfield, would later publish *Letters from an Actor* about the blow-ups he witnessed between Burton and Gielgud, while Richard L. Sterne (playing the role of "Gentleman") secreted a recording device into his briefcase every day to get material for his own tell-all—recording no less than 120 hours of tapes. It was the discovery of these two books, both of which are now out of print, that sparked the idea for the production in Mendes's mind a few years ago.

DEAL, OR NO DEAL?

Burton and Taylor on vacation at La Fiorentina, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, photographed for *Vogue* in 1967.

Making the situation even more volatile? The sheer volume of alcohol consumed during the run. "It blew my mind reading about just how much they drank," admits Middleton. "I mean, Elizabeth would carry this cabinet with all the ingredients for a Bloody Mary wherever she went." In person, the 36-year-old, recently seen in David Fincher's *Mank,* more closely resembles Taylor than I had expected, her bobbed hair almost raven-colored, her skin ivory. Based between London and Stockholm, where her partner lives, she auditioned for *The Motive and the Cue* shortly after giving birth to her first child, with Mendes reading the part of Burton. To her mind, Taylor is the wisest character in the play—summoning Gielgud to her hotel room when tensions with Burton reach a breaking point. "She's the one who's able to make fun of herself and to call herself out—she knows what her life is."

As for Gielgud, Gatiss's prep for the role has involved a "certain physical transformation" ("I have to live with the most ghastly tonsure known to man") and listening to Gielgud's 1941 *Hamlet* for the radio. Meanwhile, through his myriad West End connections, Gatiss "keeps bumping into people" who knew Gielgud personally. "I met somebody the other day who was in his last play. She said, 'Oh, I knew Johnny. I recorded him in the dressing room, if you'd like to hear it?'"

Soon, a photographer's assistant appears. The cast are needed back in wardrobe. Within six weeks, the three will be deep in rehearsals, their every waking thought devoted to Hollywood supernovas and Shakespearean tragedy. I recall an earlier comment of Flynn's: "There's a point in the script when Redfield tries to justify why he's chosen *Hamlet* over Hollywood, and he says simply: 'I wanted to be near greatness.' And I guess, for me, that's why I keep coming back to theater—it's why we all keep coming back." □

PHOTOGRAPHED BY HENRY CLARKE, *VOGUE*, SEPTEMBER 1, 1967.

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Smooth Operator

Can retinol pack the wrinkle-reducing power without the irritation? Chloe Malle test-drives a new generation of kinder formulas rebooting the superstar skin care ingredient.

Soon after I had my second child and the tight, brioche-bun sheen of pregnancy skin had faded to a postpartum gefilte-fish gray, I saw a meme on the Instagram Stories of a younger friend's *younger* sister: "If *The O.C.* was your favorite show in 2004, it's time to add retinol to your skin care routine," it read in sans serif letters over a cast photo of the beloved early-aughts high school dramedy. Already in college when it aired, I was a little too old to be gripped by Mischa Barton's teenage shenanigans, but the reference immediately aged me. A month later, a male friend caught me similarly off guard. "Do you use retinol? Should I use retinol?" he asked earnestly. There is apparently a special French formula that isn't even allowed in the United States, he relayed, wide-eyed. Retinol had become that person you meet at a party, and then run into repeatedly thereafter.

That's likely due to the fact that at 37, I am starting to seriously think about wrinkles—and how to get rid of them. But there also seems to be a retinol renaissance afoot thanks to new technology, green and clean formulas, and, of course, the medical school of TikTok, where interest in the multitasking molecule that promises to ward off the earliest signs of aging has generated over 3.2 billion views.

It's kind of like how Viagra's intended use was to treat hypertension, Elisabeth Bouhadana confirms of retinol's origin story via Zoom from her lab in Clichy, France: Thirty years ago, the rampant dispatch

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of Retin-A—also known as retinoic acid, or tretinoin in its prescription-grade form—as an oil-reducing acne solution inadvertently led to retinol's discovery as a panacea for optimizing both skin tone and texture. Wearing a crisp lab coat and a fresh blowout, the biochemist and L'Oréal Paris international scientific director is giving me a SparkNotes overview of the ingredient, which is often incorrectly used as a blanket term for a larger group of vitamin A derivatives called retinoids. "It accelerates the rate at which the new cells migrate onto the surface and stimulate messengers, which then tell the cells to produce more collagen," she explains in a jovial French accent, adding that it can take one to two months to see results.

"It's the gold standard," adds Marie-Veronique Nadeau, a chemist and the creator of her namesake natural skin care line. "There is nothing like it for not only slowing the advance of skin aging, but also to actually reverse certain types of photo damage." Nadeau and her business partner, holistic skin care expert Kristina Holey, have signed on to a call with me from their homes in the Bay Area to talk about their recently launched Multi-Retinol Night Emulsion, which is billed as a clean, microbiome-friendly replacement for prescription retinoids. As someone who has been hesitant to try retinol for fear of a bad reaction (redness, flaky-dry skin), I find the product particularly appealing because of a general approach that Holey describes as respectful of the skin's delicate moisture barrier, which, when compromised by harsh ingredients or abrasive exfoliants, loses its ability to keep hydration in and external aggressors out.

Holey and Nadeau have deployed a new class of "alt-retinols"—gentle, plant-based alternatives that often complement the hard stuff. "They can enhance retinol to make it work more efficiently," Holey explains of ingredients such as bakuchiol, which is derived from the leaves and seeds of the anti-inflammatory babchi plant, an herb common in Indian Ayurvedic and Chinese medicines. Their emulsion also includes retinyl sunflowerseedate, another bio-retinol that works to support the skin's barrier function. "It's an easier way to acclimate to a very active ingredient," explains Nadeau.

But do these bio-retinols actually do anything? And does using a nonprescription, over-the-counter retinoid defeat the purpose of using one at all?

"I'd rather you use something less aggressive more consistently so you get some benefit," suggests New York–based dermatologist Shereene Idriss, MD. I meet Idriss at her sleek Bryant Park office, her forehead as smooth as the skating rink below. "It's case by case, but retinol probably does delay how long you can go without Botox," the social-media-favorite doctor confirms. (Her heavily trafficked Instagram account features a cheat sheet of "Retinoids 101" and uses emojis to relay the ingredient's varying strength, starting with retinol ester—eyes closed smiley face—and progressing to retinoic acid—wide eyes, red cheeks.) Embracing Barbiecore in a fuchsia Veronica Beard corduroy blazer, Idriss leans over to examine my T-zone. "You talk with your forehead," she tells me sternly, motioning to the lines above my brow ridge.

> "I'd rather you use something less aggressive more consistently so you get some benefit," says dermatologist Shereene Idriss, MD

I repeat my concerns of a possible reaction, or the dreaded "skin purging"—when breakouts, redness, or irritation get worse before they get better at the beginning of a retinol regimen—to Idriss, but she assures me that new timed-release formulations for slower, gentler absorption will likely prevent that from happening. She recommends trying low concentrations in over-the-counter formulas such as SkinMedica's Retinol Complex 0.25%, once a week then gradually increasing the frequency to every night—which is good advice for any of the myriad retinol options now available to satisfy increased demand. A simple search revealed retinol hand creams (Soft Services Theraplush Overnight Repair Treatment uses 0.05% pure retinol in a satiny cream that smells like cake batter and left my hands gleaming through the morning); retinol eye creams (Ilia has added sea fennel extract, a plant-based retinol alternative to peptides and caffeine, which managed to plump my under-eye area—and maybe even lighten my dark circles); and—gasp!—a retinol-like SPF product, which was once considered unthinkable because of retinol's inherent photosensitivity. (Supergoop has boosted its mineral SPF with bakuchiol to provide bio-retinol benefits to your daily dose of UV protection with a light tint and a silky texture.) "Being able to have these ingredients in very sensorial formulas, which are also perfectly tolerated by most skin types, is really the revolution," Bouhadana says, shouting out L'Oréal's Revitalift Derm Intensives 0.3% Pure Retinol Serum, which also incorporates hydrating hyaluronic acid.

Less than two months after beginning my own retinol experience, with no irritation to speak of, I can't help but agree. The skin above my brows appears less crinkled, too; my aunt, who is prone to hyperbole, recently confirmed as much. "Look at your baby skin!" she said as I held my daughter, now 10 months. "You two look the same!" An exaggeration, yes; but validating enough to help me brush off another triggering meme I saw a few weeks later, one that timestamped various TV doctors' popularity and assigned skin treatments to their respective, aging audiences: If you loved Meredith Grey, retinoids; *ER*-era George Clooney, Botox; Doogie Howser, fillers; Hawkeye from *MASH,* skin-tightening devices. I've always been team Meredith Grey, I thought to myself, as I casually scrolled on. □

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MAKING A MOVE
Gisele Bündchen in Ann Demeulemeester, photographed by Steven Meisel, *Vogue,* January 1999.

Flemish Masters

The virtuoso tailoring of Belgium's great designers was a major influence for spring. Longtime acolyte Sarah Harris tries on the look for size.

The idea of a day dress doesn't—and has never—existed in my wardrobe. *Oh, but they're so easy*, everyone says: *Slip it on, and off you go!* But what shoes? Tights, or bare-legged? What underwear—and then what on earth goes over the top? A cardigan seems trite. A jacket? Sure, but what *kind* of jacket? Once you've overcome those challenges, you have to adhere to some basic behavioral codes, like how to sit upright, with legs crossed. (You certainly can't sit slouched in a chair or with your legs remotely apart.) Frankly, it's a minefield—and one that, yes, even as a *Vogue* editor, I've never had the patience nor the desire to navigate.

Tailoring, on the other hand, makes a whole lot of sense: A two-piece solution that works for anything, anywhere, in any season, where the only decision required is whether to wear it with a white T-shirt or a white shirt (or, perhaps, with nothing at all). I've always loved an oversized shape with roomy, mannish pleat-front trousers that sit low on the waist and pool a little—the hems scrunching up over chunky flat boots while also long enough to accommodate a heel—and I lean toward a shoulder line so broad that it announces your arrival into a room a good while before the rest of yourself slips in.

Happily, we've been seeing a big tailoring resurgence lately, particularly of the edgy and mostly monochrome kind favored by influential avant-garde Belgian designers of the '90s. Ann Demeulemeester and Martin Margiela, among others, did things their way, disrupting beauty ideals while redefining both what luxury fashion meant and what it looked like. At a time when fashion was fixated on slim, Margiela disturbed proportions to all-out gigantic. Margiela's collections were always imbued with a crafty, playful, DIY spirit: He turned clothes inside out; he cleverly deconstructed only to reassemble again, making jackets from pattern paper and layered looks literally held together by dressmaking pins. (I bought my first Margiela blazer on eBay with my first paycheck from working as a Saturday sales assistant at Harvey Nichols in London. My local dry cleaner lost it a few years later, and I still scroll through resale sites in the hope of finding it.)

More basically, there was something terrifically relatable about Demeulemeester's and Margiela's collections—something probably aided by who they chose to walk their shows: Both were among the first to cast from the street and to use older models. Their designs never felt prescriptive; they always seemed

>56

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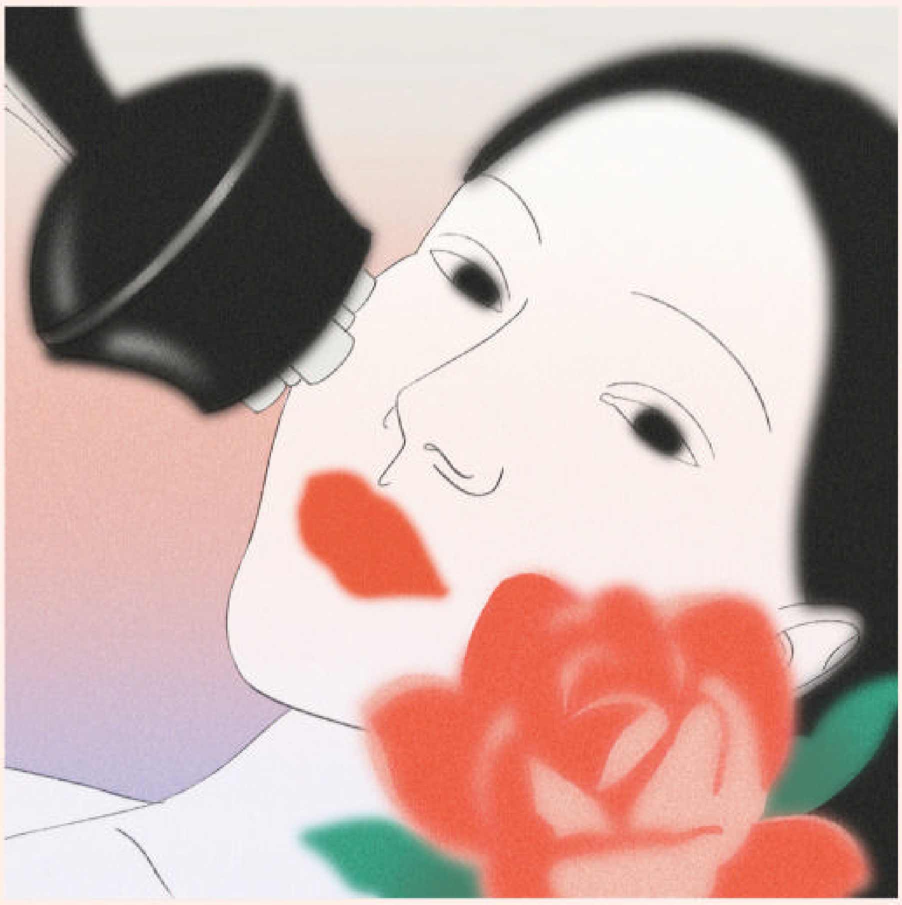
New Facial Tech triLift Offers Nip 'n Tuck Effects—Minus the Scalpel



Is it possible to turn back time? Alas not, and until now, there's been no proven way of addressing the most intractable signs of aging—sagging around the jawline, loss of cheekbone definition, and, of particular concern to me, mouth folds and pronounced pouf-iness under the eyes—unless you were committed to an ongoing regimen of masking lost definition with fillers, or prepared to go all-in on a facelift. Voluntary surgery? No thanks, in my opinion: I'd rather go to the gym than get lipo, for a host of reasons, and I've often wondered why the geniuses developing biotechnology haven't come up with a workout for the face, given that the root cause of the appearance of aging is the gradual slackening of muscles under the skin; as the muscles lengthen, they no longer support the facial structure and tissue begins to droop.

Now, at last, the geniuses have come through: What's different about triLift, the brand-new muscle stimulation treatment from Lumenis, a longtime leader in the medical-grade facial aesthetics field, is that it's tantamount to a hardcore bootcamp for the muscles, toning them up and thus restoring a more youthful, lifted appearance. The procedure is non-invasive, and unlike fillers, which disguise sagging by adding layers under the skin, triLift triggers muscles to contract, moving sagging back into place –a new, genuinely unique, all-natural and long-lasting approach to aesthetic enhancement. And, moreover, the effects are visible immediately: A face lift-like payoff, minus the face lift, in short.

The triLift dynamic muscle stimulation technology has been subjected to clinical testing, but—anecdotally—I can attest to its effectiveness. Just before the holidays, right as the winter blahs were setting in, I visited the Manhattan Face and Eye clinic, headed by genial aesthetic surgeon James Chelnis, M.D., to discover whether triLift could do something about my deepening mouth folds and the bags under my eyes—and the deep grooves setting in below them. "That's exactly what triLift was designed for," explained the doctor, who specializes in Ophthalmic Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery. "Before this technology existed, the only way I could have helped you was by putting you under the knife." In comparison, the electric fizz of pricks as the triLift stimulation wand jolted key facial muscles, and the hot shower-level heat delivered by its Tripollar RF (for bonus skin strengthening/collagen regeneration) were not at all a big deal. In fact, compared to other high-tech facial treatments I've had, or rather, endured, triLift was an enjoyable experience, along the lines of getting a deep tissue massage: Occasional discomfort but also oddly relaxing. And the downtime was exactly none: I left Dr. Chelnis' office and went straight to a holiday party, with no trace of the treatment on my face aside from some barely-noticeable redness from its finale, the gentlest microneedling I have ever experienced. (And it didn't even require topical numbing.)

By morning, the redness was gone—and so were the smile lines and grooves under my eyes. Well, mostly gone. But given that the triLift process recommended for optimal results is a course of 4-6 weekly treatments, and I'd only gone in once, the transformation was astonishing. No lie: I've seen superficial improvements from other interventions on the market (laser, microcurrent, you-name-it) but this was easily the greatest victory I have ever chalked up in my ersatz battles against Father Time.

Consider me a believer. And, thanks to the Tripollar RF and the microneedling, there was more good to come: One laboratory study has shown that, in addition to its immediate resurfacing effects, the triLift microneedle improves skin's natural production of hyaluronic acid up to 300%. That's one reason triLift effects are long-lasting: Depending on how many treatments you do, youthful skin tone, volume and structure are sustained for a minimum of four to six months. And as Dr. Chelnis pointed out to me, triLift may work preventatively, too, perhaps delaying the onset jawline sag, for example.

"What I love about this treatment is that, these three elements—the Dynamic Muscle Stimulation, the radiofrequency, the microneedling—they cover every aspect of what we associate with aging, from what's happening on top of the skin to the structure supporting it," says Dr. Chelnis. "The technology has been developed in order to awaken all the natural processes that create a youthful appearance." As someone who's always been a touch needle-wary, it's a relief to know there's now a non-invasive way to achieve the toned and lifted visage I think of as looking like myself. Because, lord knows, much as I dislike needles, I like surgeon's knives even less.

Contraindications and Risks

Lumenis energy-based reatments are not suitable for everyone and do carry some risks. triLift treatment is not suitable for patients with pacemakers, defibrillators, or any implanted electronic devices, as well as metal implants in the treatment area. Risks may include damage to natural skin texture, skin redness, swelling, bruising, itching and change of pigmentation. Be sure to consult with your treatment provider before choosing this treatment.

For additional information and supporting citations, visit triLift.me or contact Lumenis through its social media channels.

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imbued with an essence of adaptability that empowered the wearer to decide how *she* might put them together. Demeulemeester's white shirts fell just so from a shoulder, suspended by a strap, with ties and tendrils to inflate or deflate, while flattering bias cuts encouraged movement and worked on all body types. Demeulemeester often tried on every piece she designed herself—especially her androgynous, several-sizes-up tailoring—until she found that perfect degree of slouch. (Her starting point: a child dressed in their grandfather's clothes.)

The spring '23 collections were awash with references: See Gigi Hadid walking for Victoria Beckham in *that* great suit, deconstructed at the back; moody, mannish tailoring at Burberry; a series of inky all-black looks at Dries Van Noten; minimal but gargantuan double-breasted blazers and breezy white shirts at Stella McCartney. Even Valentino, it seems, got the bigger-is-better shoulder memo.

But we've seen big shoulders and boxy tailoring for a few years now, you cry, and you'd be right—but this time around it feels softer, more romantic. Even more conceptual pieces were threaded with tenderness; sometimes a hint of a waist came back into focus. After a few years in which we seem to have been looking for an element of protection from our wardrobes, this season's approach feels more optimistic.

That's how I feel wearing one of my recent acquisitions: a black suit by Wardrobe.NYC, the tightly edited line of luxury essentials cofounded by Christine Centenera. It's from a capsule collection codesigned with Hailey Bieber and available in either black or biscuit. "You'd be a size S or XS," she tells me in her Paris showroom as she drapes what looks like—and feels like—an XXXL blazer over me. There's just something about the sheer weight of her tailoring that, yes, makes it hang just so—but that also feels immediately reassuring, comforting even.

"I'm drawn to strong shoulders and silhouettes," Centenera says. "I think tailoring frames you in a way that makes you feel powerful, in control, and confident." Perhaps surprisingly, height restrictions don't apply: Centenera's diminutive frame is proof that you don't have to be six-foot-something to carry off an exaggerated proportion. Almost no one looks as good in her clothes as she does—and that's saying something when she's standing next to Bieber at Caviar Kaspia later that evening for a celebratory dinner to launch the collection.

PLAYING IT STRAIGHT

The author, wearing an Ann Demeulemeester shirt and Wardrobe.NYC wide-leg pants. Photographed by Buzz White.

I ordered the jacket and overcoat then and there, and bought the matching trousers as soon as Net-a-Porter replenished its stock. The suit is exactly what I reach for when I can't decide what to wear—to the office, to a fashion show, to a black-tie event (just switch out a T-shirt for a rivière). Nothing, but *nothing,* in your wardrobe will work harder for you.

There are also very few pieces from Peter Do's triumphant collection that I don't want. Do opened his almost entirely black and white show with a suit comprising a sharp, long-line blazer, elegantly drawn in at the waist and with sleeves stretching to the knuckles, and ballooning trousers. The surprise was at the back, which he opened up completely with a circular cutout. Deconstruction was a recurring theme here: Linings, frayed edges, and tacking stitches were all exposed. Do, a big Margiela fan, learned how to make suits from scratch in tailoring classes at FIT. "After that, I was hooked on the process," he says. "I was fascinated by the inner construction."

Crucially, Do works on fittings on both men and women. "The dialogues from those are what inform our design details," he explains, adding, "We're moving toward sizing in XS through XL, instead of numbers, to accommodate a broader customer range." Also of note were Demeulemeester-esque white oversized shirttails, cinched at the back, with an extra long buckled belt left to trail nonchalantly on the floor. Imagine turning to make an exit in that—a kind of fashion mic drop.

"Everything Ann [Demeulemeester] stood for is still so relevant today," says Ludovic de Saint Sernin, who will debut his first collection for the label during Paris Fashion Week in March. "My vision is to go back to Ann's early days; to something very fluid, but powerful. I want something that feels more feminine and poetic. It's a house that wears a woman's name, so I really want to honor that."

Of course, there's a lot to be said in favor of going back to the original source. I recently stumbled across a vintage Margiela blazer—not my long-lost favorite, but one from Nick Royal's archive: oatmeal-colored linen, elongated, strong-shouldered and wide-lapeled, and with a cleverly curved sleeve that magically skims your every line and movement. The jacket is 25 years old, yet it looks better now than it did then.

It's the kind of jacket that, come to think of it, one might even consider wearing over a day dress. □

HAIR: JOSH KNIGHT. MAKEUP: LUCY BURT. FOR DETAILS, SEE IN THIS ISSUE.

VERSACE pour femme DYLAN PURPLE

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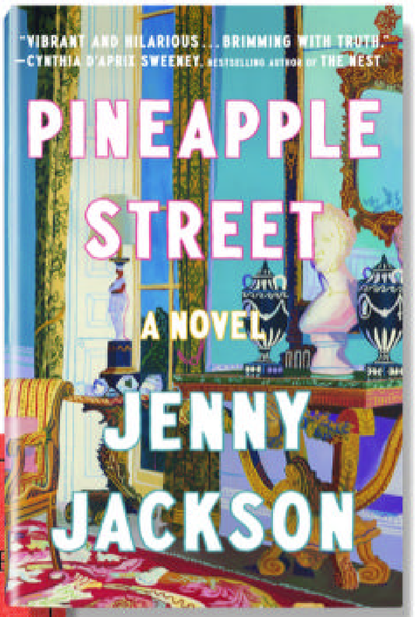
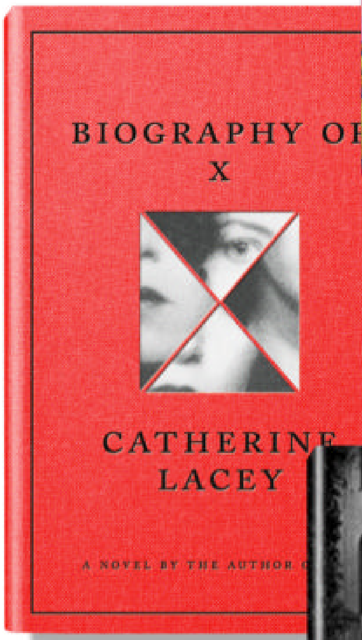
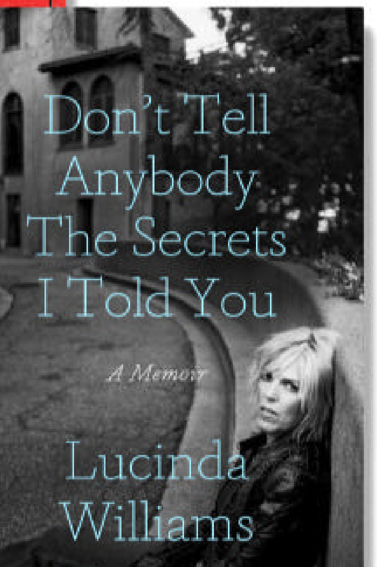

"VIBRANT AND HILARIOUS... BRIMMING WITH TRUTH." —CYNTHIA D'APRIX SWEENEY, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE NEST
PINEAPPLE STREET
A NOVEL
JENNY JACKSON

Jenny Jackson's novel **Pineapple Street (Pamela Dorman Books)** is a delicious modern-day Gilded Age drama set in the leafy enclaves of Brooklyn Heights. It follows three women in the Stockton family, a clan that made their money in real estate and left subsequent generations to alternately indulge in and wring their hands over the inherited fortune. Family members make their way from their nonprofit jobs and school fundraisers to tennis clubs and private planes. It's a lighthearted book that captures New York society, a guilty pleasure that also feels like a sociological text, punctuated with very particular references to touchstones of urban life in 2023 among the 1 percent.



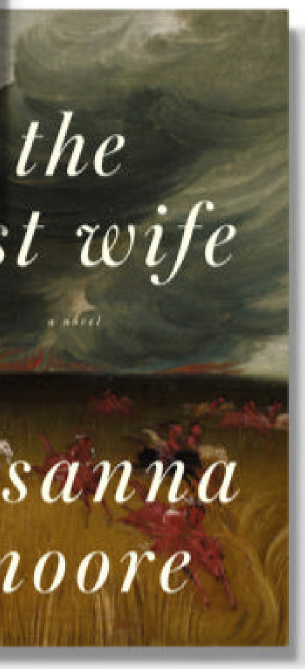
Catherine Lacey's **Biography of X (Macmillan)** is a complicated book tackling a simple question: How well can you ever know another person? In this case, the subject of the inquiry is X, an enigmatic artist who is also the late wife of Lacey's narrator. After her death, the widow sets out to try to tell the "truth" about X—a woman who reinvented herself several times over. With its inclusion of photos, transcripts of interviews, and facsimiles of documents, the book at times resembles the collage-like work of W. G. Sebald, at others, the alternative history of a writer like Colson Whitehead. X was not only a visionary, she was a refugee from the "Southern Territory"—a fascist regime that separated from the rest of the United States after World War II. The mystery of her motivations provides the engine for this layered book.



If you know much about singer-songwriter Lucinda Williams, it's likely through her gorgeous, sometimes gut-punch music, which fuses everything from rock to country, folk to hip-hop. **Don't Tell Anybody the Secrets I Told You (Crown)**, her memoir, comes with plenty of backstory about how those songs were written and what they're about—but it's her rough-hewn yet oddly precocious early family life that's most intriguing: her mother, plagued by mental illness and alcoholism and often absent; her father, a kind of itinerant academic, leading the family from Louisiana to Iowa, Mississippi, Utah, Georgia, Chile, New Orleans, and Mexico before settling for good in Arkansas. Williams grew up steeped in a kind of boozy, boisterous literary culture and met many of her father's friends, from Flannery O'Connor to Pablo Neruda, along the way, and her memoir transmutes the wisdom, pain, and hard-won joy of her life into stories that stick with you.

THE HALF MOON
A NOVEL
MARY BETH KEANE
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF ASK AGAIN, YES

Mary Beth Keane's 2019 novel *Ask Again, Yes* was a best-selling portrait of a pair of hardworking Irish American families in suburban New York whose lives intersect and fall apart. Her deft, satisfying fourth novel, **The Half Moon (Scribner)**, returns to a similar milieu and tells the more concentrated story of Malcolm Gephardt, a 40-something bar owner, as personable as he is emotionally hapless, struggling to save his business and marriage to an attorney wife who justifiably wants more. Keane writes in a sturdy realist vein, but her insights into matters of the heart, into adult longing and restlessness especially, have astonishing delicacy.



It's fitting that **The Lost Wife (Knopf)**, Susanna Moore's first work of fiction in over a decade, should directly follow *Miss Aluminum*, her lustrous 2020 memoir; this book, like that one, tells the story of a woman continuously transformed by difficult relationships and sweeping changes of circumstance. In the new novel, Moore's protagonist is Sarah, a 25-year-old wife and mother who leaves an unhappy home in Rhode Island for a fresh start in Minnesota, where white settlers have forged an uneasy peace with the Sioux people. Sarah's new marriage to a respected (if repressed and opium-addicted) local doctor grants her money and status for the first time in her life—but when she's abducted during the US-Dakota War of 1862, her loyalty to him, and to so-called civilized society in general, is tested. Even transposed onto the 19th-century American prairie, Moore's voice is cool and sure, rich with detail. □

FROM TOP: *PINEAPPLE STREET*: COURTESY OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE. *BIOGRAPHY OF X*: COURTESY OF FARRAR, STRAUSS AND GIROUX. *DON'T TELL ANYBODY THE SECRETS I TOLD YOU*: COURTESY OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE. *THE HALF MOON*: COURTESY OF SIMON & SCHUSTER. *THE LOST WIFE*: COURTESY OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE.

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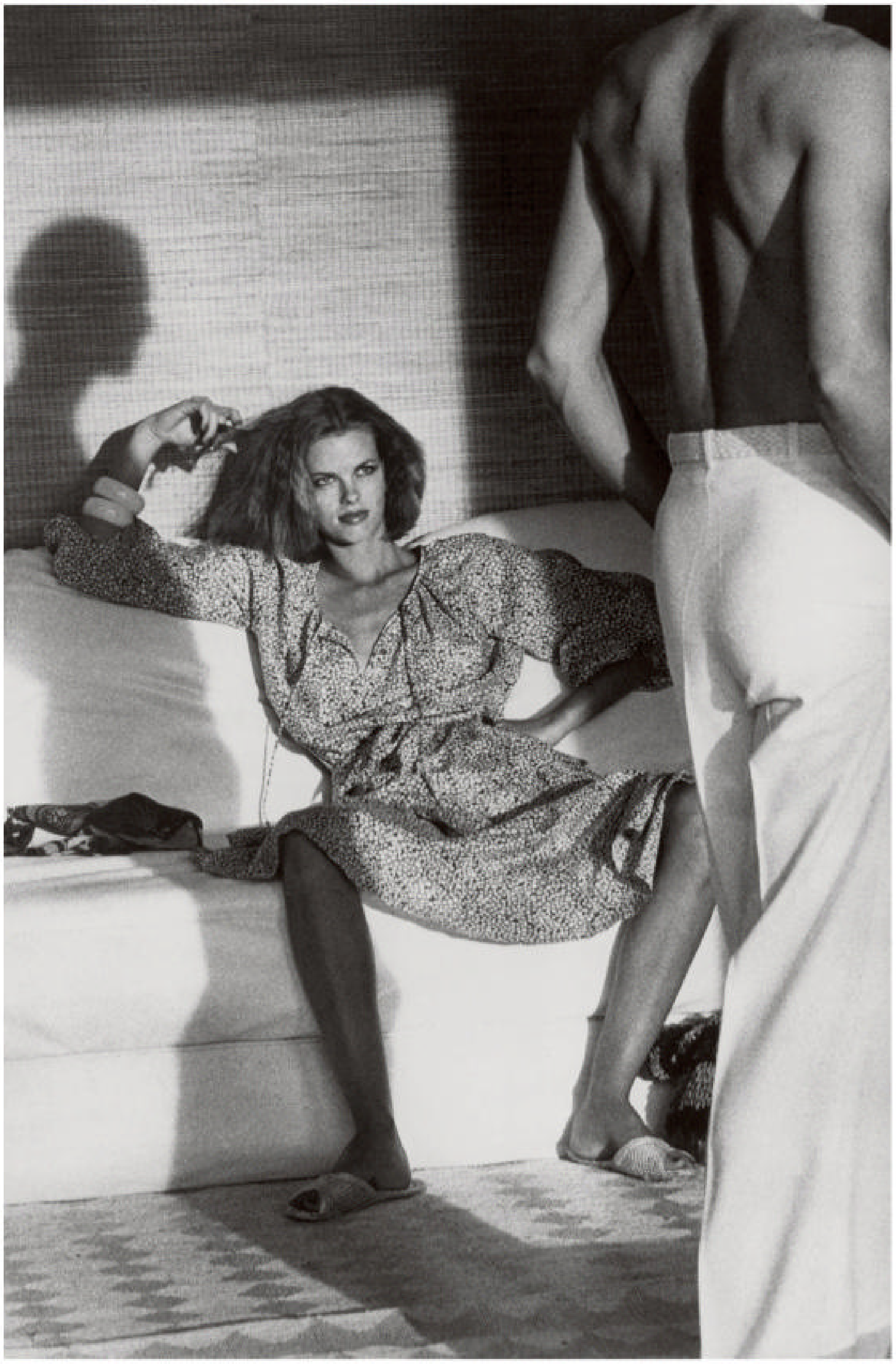
Looking Both Ways

A major exhibition at the Palazzo Grassi mines treasures from Condé Nast's rich photographic archive.

When, in the May 1975 issue of *Vogue,* a Helmut Newton portfolio announced it the season of "bare summer skin, tinted lightly by the sun…and smelling delicious," the photographer set a provocative new tone for editorial photography. Radiating eroticism (see the indelible shot of model Lisa Taylor eyeing a man's naked torso at right), his images of slinking, golden bodies helped to establish the aesthetics of a hedonistic, body-con decade. Moments like these—when photography reflects (and sometimes creates the vision of) an entire era—undergird a new exhibition in Venice, where some 70 years' worth of visuals from Condé Nast, including many from this very magazine, will be on display at the splendid Palazzo Grassi, one of the Pinault Collection's many venues for contemporary art. "Chronorama: Photographic Treasures of the 20th Century," on view until January 2024, offers a sweeping survey of contemporary life from the 1910s until 1979, filtered through some 400 works by Edward Steichen, Cecil Beaton, Lee Miller, Horst P. Horst, Irving Penn, Newton, Diane Arbus, and many others. (Its title, combining a reference to Kronos, the Greek god of time, with the suffix "orama," referring to vision, centers the culture-defining import of their imagery.) An accompanying catalog includes contributions by experts and scholars such as writer Robin Muir, the London College of Fashion's Susanna Brown, and Ivan Shaw, Condé Nast's corporate photography director.



PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

The show's vast selection includes iconic images by Irving Penn (TOP LEFT AND BELOW), Helmut Newton (ABOVE), and other innovators.

Curator Matthieu Humery, the adviser of photography for the Pinault Collection, which acquired a large swath of the Condé Nast archives in 2021, describes the

>68

TOP LEFT: PHOTOGRAPHED BY IRVING PENN/COURTESY OF THE IRVING PENN FOUNDATION. TOP RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHED BY HELMUT NEWTON, *VOGUE*, MAY 1, 1975. BOTTOM: PHOTOGRAPHED BY IRVING PENN, *VOGUE*, JULY 1, 1952.

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LINE OF SIGHT

Edward Steichen's elegant *Models seated in the back of George Baher's yacht,* from a 1928 issue of *Vogue*, also appears in the show.

show as an "archeology of photography." While many early prints by Steichen, Maurice Goldberg, and their ilk were signed and mounted like miniature paintings, later examples bear signs of certain technical innovations that emerged in the medium, including artful approaches to retouching. (And that's to say nothing of the pictures' subjects, which range over the decades from dancers of the Ballets Russes to G.I.s, politicians, architects, actors, and musicians.) "Chronorama" takes a lavishly long view of such developments: Aesthetically, "when you move from, let's say, the end of the 1920s to the early 1930s, you don't really see the difference," Humery says. "It's like in real life; you don't see yourself aging. Then, at the end, when you are at around '78, '79, it's much more resonant with what is going on today."

Intentionally interrupting the show's chronology is a project called Chronorama Redux, for which four contemporary artists—Eric N. Mack of the United States, Tarrah Krajnak of Peru, Giulia Andreani of Italy, and Daniel Spivakov of Ukraine—have created new works inspired by those in the Condé Nast archives. The hope is to show how a "historical, classical exhibition" can be reinterpreted by a new generation, says Humery. "You give these images the opportunity to have a second life."—MARLEY MARIUS

Lip Service

Makeup artist Fara Homidi lends her gestural sensibility to a debut product line.

When the makeup artist Fara Homidi moved to New York in 2008, the fashion industry she longed to be a part of as an Afghani refugee growing up in Fremont, California, had already gone digital. "All the images were super saturated and there was a lot of makeup," she recalls. "I didn't know how I fit into that world," Homidi continues, detailing a light-handed touch that has long informed her aesthetic. But she found a kindred spirit in the photographer Zoë Ghertner. "Fara's work isn't ever overloaded, but I wouldn't call it minimal or simple; it's emotional," Ghertner offers, reflecting on their decade-long collaborative relationship. (Recent efforts include Miu Miu's spring campaign, in which bare skin featured deliberate swipes of clear gloss on eyes and lips.) That same sensibility, which has earned Homidi *Vogue* covers and the trust of designers including the late Virgil Abloh and Coperni's Sébastien Meyer and Arnaud Vaillant, now informs her debut product effort, a tightly edited collection of creamy lip pencils and dual-sided, refillable sky-blue lip compacts. "I am endlessly delighted by texture. I can still spend hours in a Sephora," the 42-year-old says with a laugh. (As part of the mega retailer's 2022 Accelerate program, Homidi and a small cohort of other BIPOC founders received a crash course in the business of beauty.) That joy is evident in her whipped and long-wearing Color Plush Soft Matte pigment that can be layered with her Prime Baume, a nourishing blend of plant oils and waxes, which could easily be worn alone. In fact, Homidi recommends as much. "I think it's something that's kind of intuitive," she says of the line's versatility, which she hopes to preview at the fall collections. It's one of the many attributes that excites model Paloma Elsesser, who stars as one of the faces in Homidi's first campaign. "They're not giving full-glamour beat," Elsesser says of the mix-and-match products, "but they can!"—CELIA ELLENBERG

FARA HOMIDI
FARA HOMIDI

SWIPE RIGHT

Available in four shades, Homidi's dual-sided color compacts double as refillable keepsakes.

TOP: PHOTOGRAPHED BY EDWARD STEICHEN, *VOGUE*, JULY 15, 1975.
BOTTOM: HANNA TVEITE/COURTESY OF FARA HOMIDI.

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REAL LAVENDER
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Begin Again

At 30, Cara Delevingne is reckoning with a life lived close to the edge. She opens up to Chioma Nnadi about slowing down, taking care of herself, and where she goes from here. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz.

HAT TRICK
"I've had to dig deeper," says Cara Delevingne. Maison Margiela cardigan and hat. Converse shoes.
Fashion Editor: Jorden Bickham.

Conceived as a playhouse for adults, Cara Delevingne's 1940s white-brick home in Los Angeles is the stuff of design-world lore. It brims with madcap furnishings, each corner appointed with her signature wit and imagination. There's a tented poker room draped in red velvet, a David Bowie–themed bathroom, a ball pit with circus-stripe walls, trampolines laid into the lawn.

When I arrive at the big blue front doors on a cloudless day in late January, Delevingne greets me with a warm hug. She has the gawky charm of a teenage music nerd—barefoot and dressed in an oversized vintage Prince T-shirt matched with gray marl gym shorts—and ushers me quickly past the crystal clear baby grand piano and the glowing James Turrell art installation up to the den on the first floor. If each room reflects a side of her personality, then this space suggests Delevingne at her most introspective. Decorated with little more than a few graphic Bowie concert posters, it's the one room where the famously kinetic British model and actor might occasionally sit still. "Did you feel the earthquake last night?" she asks, referring to the 4.2 magnitude shock waves that struck off the coast of Malibu in the early hours of the morning. I confess I slept through it, and I'm surprised that she didn't as well. Could anything rock the foundations of this fantastical bachelorette pad? "They don't really scare me much," she says dryly, of earthquakes, sinking her gangly limbs into the sofa and curling up with her dogs—one a Pomeranian husky named Leo, the other a Chihuahua terrier called Alfie. "I guess I'm just always ready for the ground to fall beneath my feet."

> "I always kind of knew that things were going to have to be different in my 30s, because the way that I was living was not sustainable"

After an emotionally turbulent year, Delevingne is slowly beginning to find her center: She's proud to tell me that her commitment to sobriety is some four months and counting. "The games, the crazy performances, the escape rooms—I loved giving that to people," she says. "They could come here and leave their stress and responsibilities behind, and maybe that sounds like Willy Wonka, but it was the idea that they could come and just be like kids," she says. "But in giving that to people, I was kind of stuck in myself."

On the outside, Delevingne has always played the beguiling mischief-maker. She shook up the modeling world as a wide-eyed 18-year-old schoolgirl from London, shooting to fame as the face of Burberry in 2011. Along with those magnificent caterpillar brows, her high-spirited nature and wry sense of humor helped propel her to stardom over a decade when personality was all but shunned on the runway. Here was a young woman who was self-possessed, even in the blinding glare of the spotlight—and her ascent to Hollywood with roles in films like *Paper Towns* (2015) and *Suicide Squad* (2016) only furthered that perception. On the inside, however, she was struggling to make sense of who she was. "If you have problems going into this industry, they will only get magnified and exacerbated," says Delevingne. "There is nothing about it that makes it better."

Still, few could have anticipated Delevingne's all-too-public unraveling last September, shortly after her 30th birthday, when she was photographed looking disheveled and distressed at the Van Nuys Airport in Los Angeles. The tabloids were quick to draw comparisons to Delevingne's 63-year-old mother, Pandora, who has talked about her struggles with bipolar disorder and heroin addiction. Then, just weeks later, defying all expectations, Delevingne appeared at a Paris Fashion Week event for a collaboration honoring her friend the late Karl Lagerfeld, looking coiffed and radiant. Fans were left wondering: Had the headlines about Delevingne's so-called downward spiral been blown out of proportion? Was Cara okay or was she not?

Delevingne describes those paparazzi photos as a source of overwhelming shame and embarrassment, and an urgent wake-up call to step away from the substances and the alcohol that had long seduced her with their offer of escape, and to confront deeper personal issues that she'd been running away from. Delevingne had just returned from Burning Man—"I hadn't slept. I was not okay," she says—and was en route to a work engagement. "It's heartbreaking because I thought I was having fun, but at some point it was like, Okay, I don't look well." She pauses to gather her thoughts, then continues. "You know, sometimes you need a reality check, so in a way those pictures were something to be grateful for."

The tumultuous narrative arc of Delevingne's interior life begins when she was a child born into a wealthy family—her father, Charles, a property developer, her socialite mother the daughter of Jocelyn Stevens, a Fleet Street executive, and Jane Sheffield, a lady-in-waiting to Princess Margaret. "In a way, a lot of people have looked at my childhood or my family and thought, *She's spoiled, there's nepotism, she grew up extremely privileged,* which I did, don't get me wrong," she says. "But life wasn't all that easy for other reasons." Delevingne admits she's still grappling with the history of addiction her mother has talked openly about. In 2017, Cara cowrote a young adult novel, *Mirror, Mirror,* that was informed by the maelstrom of her teenage years. It is no accident that the protagonist's mother was an alcoholic. "For a long time, I didn't really put myself in her shoes," Delevingne says. "I just needed someone to be angry at and I was angry at her, but it wasn't her fault.... The way that addiction took my mother from me was brutal, and it was brutal for her too."

As a child, Delevingne was precocious, curious, and exceptionally bright. Though not academically gifted, she excelled in the arts. "She was always uniquely talented," remembers Delevingne's aunt, the author and editor Melinda Stevens. "Whatever she picked up—whether it was a guitar or a piano or whatever—she just could play it and nail it. She has a kind of prodigy-ish note in her. But

FRESH START
Delevingne wears a Bottega Veneta shirt and tank top. Dior jeans. Tiffany & Co. earring.

ROUGH AND TUMBLE

Delevingne wears a Loro Piana sweater. Alberta Ferretti pants. Church's shoes.

even if she was quiet in moments, the inner whirrings of her mind were always churning away." Delevingne attended Bedales, the well-known liberal arts boarding school in Hampshire, England, committing herself to drama and music, even as the emotional chaos of her upbringing continued to follow her. "I was happy as a kid for sure, but I think when I grew up, I looked back and realized, *That's not normal,*" says Delevingne. "And then as a teenager, it just all came plummeting down. That's also when I started drinking and partying. There was this need to escape and change my reality as I was hit with just huge questions: What am I doing here? Who am I trying to be?"

She recalls her first experience with alcohol misuse at just seven years old, at a family wedding. "I woke up in my granny's house in my bedroom with a hangover, in a bridesmaid's dress," says Delevingne. "I'd gone around nailing glasses of Champagne." By the age of 10, she was prescribed sleeping pills to manage crippling insomnia. She was also diagnosed with dyspraxia, a disorder that affects movement and coordination. "This was the beginning of mental health issues and inadvertent self-harm," she remembers, and led to various forms of therapy—"art therapy, music therapy, EMDR, CBT," she says, rattling off the list. Then at 15, she suffered a breakdown, and was put on antidepressants to help her cope with her deep sense of isolation. "I was on medication and it just…it saved my life," she says. "This wasn't a chemical imbalance as much as it was a full trauma response," she adds. "I hadn't uncovered the fucking hole inside, the real whirlpool within. And I still think there's a part of diagnosis and labeling that is damaging. There were so many times that I was encouraged to take this or be put on that." Now, she says, "I'm more of a naturalist, a purist in a sense, when it comes to medications."

Delevingne has weathered bouts of depression at various stages of her life, but in 2020, as the world went into lockdown, she hit a wall. "In the beginning, I was living with people in this COVID bubble in LA. We thought it was going to be a weeklong thing, and so it was fun." She started her quarantine with Ashley Benson, her then girlfriend of almost two years. By April their relationship had ended. "And then I was alone, really alone…it was a low point." As each day bled into the next, she struggled to get out of bed. "I just had a complete existential crisis. All my sense of belonging, all my validation—my identity, everything—was so wrapped up in work. And when that was gone, I felt like I had no purpose. I just wasn't worth anything without work, and that was scary," she says. "Instead of taking the time to really learn something new or do something new, I got very wrapped up in misery, wallowing, and partying. It was a really sad time."

As the world began to open up, Delevingne quickly fell back into her old patterns, throwing herself into work the first chance she could, and partying hard in her downtime. "I'm classically good at avoiding things, I just didn't want to deal with my issues," she says. "And those are things I've been running from since I was a kid." In the fall of 2021, on the heels of shooting the popular fantasy TV series *Carnival Row* in Prague, a project came along that required her to reveal herself in a way that she'd never done before: *Planet Sex,* the six-part docuseries exploring sexuality and gender recently released on Hulu. It acted on her as a kind of mirror. "It was super personal and I didn't really realize how personal it would be," says Delevingne, who remembers being moved to the point of tears at the end of her first day on location at the Dinah Shore Weekend in Palm Springs, billed as the world's largest festival for queer women. "I'd only really learned how to show emotion when I was acting because I didn't feel worthy enough to feel those things as myself. With *Planet Sex,* I was just so uncomfortable in front of the camera in the beginning because it was like, *Oh, God, I've gotta be myself.*"

On the show, Delevingne unpacks the complexities of her queer identity. "I still struggle with being open—really open—about just how much I love women," she says in the first episode, speaking directly to camera. Jessica Chermayeff and Ana Veselic, the couple who directed the docuseries, were instantly taken by this directness and her willingness to be vulnerable. "I think a lot of celebrities say they're on a personal journey, but with her it was more than just lip service," says Chermayeff. "She was scared in all the right ways." Veselic concurs: "Cara was very open. Not everything was this perfect platitude statement, this neat little answer that checks all the boxes. There were definitely gray areas. As a viewer, I really miss that in conversations like this, because it's not black and white."

But there was still more personal turmoil to come: While filming *Planet Sex* in Tokyo the following spring, she received the crushing news that her grandmother Jane Sheffield had died. For Delevingne, Sheffield had always afforded her a rare safe space as a child—a place to be herself, a home and a garden to play in. "I would stay with her in her house in the country. She looked after me a lot when my parents weren't able to…. When I heard she had died there were a lot of things I had to process because I hadn't seen her since Christmas the year before. I was really trying to pour everything I had into work, and every night I would come back from filming and sit alone and just cry. By the time I got to the Met Ball two weeks later I was fucking exhausted." When Delevingne, who suffers from psoriasis, walked the carpet of the gala covered in gold body paint, dry flaking patches of her skin were laid bare, visibly inflamed. "It was a sign of the major stress in my life," she says, "that I couldn't cope, that my body, this sensitive organ, couldn't handle it." But, she says, she didn't hold back at the after-parties. "I went and got blackout afterwards. It was like, *What am I doing?* The day after, I had to travel to my granny's funeral. It was horrible."

And so she embarked on a summer of self-destructive and hedonistic revelry. "I always kind of knew that things were going to have to be different in my 30s, because the way that I was living was not sustainable," she says. As a last hurrah for her 20s, Delevingne planned a blowout *Alice in Wonderland*–themed birthday party, the crescendo to a three-week-long vacation in Ibiza. "I told myself, I should be having such a good time. I've got all my friends here. I need to be enjoying this. The house I was staying in had a tower and I would just kind of lock myself in it instead. I barely left the room." She describes the feeling of foreboding as like "a slowly beating drum inside." "There was this need for change, but I was fighting it so much. I was welcoming in this new time but I was also grieving. It was like a funeral for my previous life, a goodbye to an era. And so I decided I was going to party as hard as I could because this was the end."

Things came to a head when she flew from Europe to Nevada's Black Rock Desert for Burning Man. "There's an element of feeling invincible when I'm on drugs," she says. "I put myself in danger in those moments because I don't care about my life," she says. Her memories of that time are somewhat fragmented, refracted through substances that she doesn't name, but aren't hard to guess at—whatever would ramp her up and keep introspection at bay. She recollects being covered in inexplicable bruises. "I would climb anything and jump off stuff…it felt feral," she says. "It's a scary thing to the people around you who love you."

For members of Delevingne's family, witnessing this brilliant yet deeply troubled young woman on the verge was painful. "It was scary, we were longing for something to change, but you can't project that onto someone else," says Stevens. "There were plans to do something about it, a lot of coordinating with her sisters and closest friends. We spent a lot of time with each other that summer, and it was reaching a pitch." As her mother's younger sister, Stevens shares a special bond with Delevingne, who is also the youngest of her siblings, Poppy and Chloe. "We've remained extremely close and connected whether we're on opposite sides of the world or not," Stevens says. She recalls a plane ride she took with Delevingne toward the end of her birthday celebrations as a major inflection point. "Obviously there have been highs and lows—huge highs and lows," she says. "So I'm just extremely proud that she got to this new start of her own volition, because she's so capable, she's so strong."

> She describes those paparazzi photos as a source of overwhelming shame and embarrassment, and an urgent wake-up call

That fall, after the paparazzi photos came out, a tight group of Delevingne's childhood friends, many of them Brits living in LA, rallied around her. Delevingne confesses that, at first, she struggled to make the most of the support. "I have so many friends," she tells me. "They ride for me and I love my friends so much, but it felt like a lot of the time, they were shallow relationships only because I wasn't able to be honest about the things I was going through. I didn't want to burden anyone. It was also like, What if people leave? If you ask any of my friends, they would say they'd never seen me cry." Meanwhile, she says a brand that had once lifted her up as a vocal mental health advocate was now shying away. Suddenly all the meaningful connections she'd made seemed more valuable than ever. "From September, I just needed support. I needed to start reaching out. And my old friends I've known since I was 13, they all came over and we started crying. They looked at me and said, 'You deserve a chance to have joy.'"

Her circle is wide-ranging and has remained steadfast. *Only Murders in the Building* costar Selena Gomez, a close friend, says she is someone who "wants the best for other people." Phoebe Waller-Bridge describes her as "deeply loyal" and "unnervingly wise." "We all have moments in our lives that we'd rather weren't photographed and shown to everyone. She has maintained her honesty and vulnerability and is open-hearted about her life and her experiences—what more can you ask of a person who is living their life in a fishbowl?" Waller-Bridge met Delevingne in London a few years back. "There isn't anyone like her in the world. She has been a rock-solid friend to me," she says. Margot Robbie, who came to know Delevingne on the set of *Suicide Squad,* echoes the sentiment. "We shared most of our 20s together and we were by each other's side as we entered our 30s," says the 32-year-old actor. "I was literally with her the day I turned 30 and vice versa. I think it will always be that way—40s, 50s, 60s. God knows what we'll be doing on our 70th birthday, but the thought of it already makes me laugh."

Those who have known Delevingne since before she was famous all point to her irrepressible verve. "Even if you don't meet her in person, you can sense it through the lens," says Stella McCartney. "Her charisma, it's just not of this planet, is it?" says Sienna Miller, a family friend who first encountered Delevingne when she was a teenager and describes her as "the most special person I've ever met." She recalls Delevingne's early career in the nascent days of social media as extreme and high-octane. "I remember having lunch with her in New York, and just a million more people were following her on Instagram each day. It was really overwhelming because it came out of nowhere." For Miller, the challenges that Delevingne has faced are all too relatable. "In my 20s, I experienced complete chaos in my own life, because I didn't know how to manage what was being flung at me. And for someone with that amount of fire and life in them, it can be really difficult," Miller says. "For her to have reached this point, to have done the 180 and completely turned around and started walking in a different direction is astounding. Sobriety is a difficult road, and she's made this step, she's seen herself, and I think she is loving herself more than she's ever loved herself."

Delevingne's current girlfriend, Leah Mason, a musician who goes by the moniker Minke, has stuck by her in dark moments too. While they started seeing each other a little over a year ago, the bond runs deep. They first met as kids at Bedales, then lost contact before reconnecting at an Alanis Morissette concert 12 years later. "She's the type of person who has boundaries, and there came a point with me when she wasn't going to have it much longer, and it was a blessing in disguise," Delevingne tells me. "It's the first time I feel like I'm in a relationship not trying to rescue someone." Shy and soft-spoken, Mason arrives at the house later that afternoon and we're briefly introduced over cups of ginger and turmeric tea. The couple spent the holidays in Utah. This was Delevingne's first time doing Christmas and New Year's Eve sober. "It was just the two of us," she says. "I was in bed by 12:15 a.m. on New Year's Eve having the nicest time."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 128

NATURAL WONDER
Delevingne gets down to earth in a Stella McCartney x Radiant Matter jumpsuit, covered in plastic-free BioSequins. In this story: hair, Tamara McNaughton; makeup, Romy Soleimani. Photographed at Sandstone, Semler Family Ranch. Details, see In This Issue.

SET DESIGN: MARY HOWARD STUDIO.

A CUT ABOVE
Model Emily Ratajkowski makes herself useful—never you mind with what!—in a look that's all business: one dreamily oversized **Hermès** jacket (Hermès boutiques) plus a cozy-cool **Balenciaga** shoe.
Fashion Editor: Alex Harrington.

Practically Perfect

Top to toe, the most hardworking pieces in your wardrobe have never looked quite so good—or been quite so fun to wear. Photographed by Nigel Shafran.

ALL THAT AND A BAG OF CHIPS

For a look that marries prim practicality with a pop of pure extravagance: a double-breasted **Louis Vuitton** coat (select Louis Vuitton boutiques) and **Marc Jacobs** platform boots.

BEAUTY NOTE
Stack your skin routine. Noble Panacea's The Elemental Cleansing Balm & Exfoliating Refiner features a two-step system designed to gently cleanse and clarify in recyclable, single-use treatments.

WARNING
Security Cameras In Use
FIRST AID KIT LOCATED IN THE OFFICE
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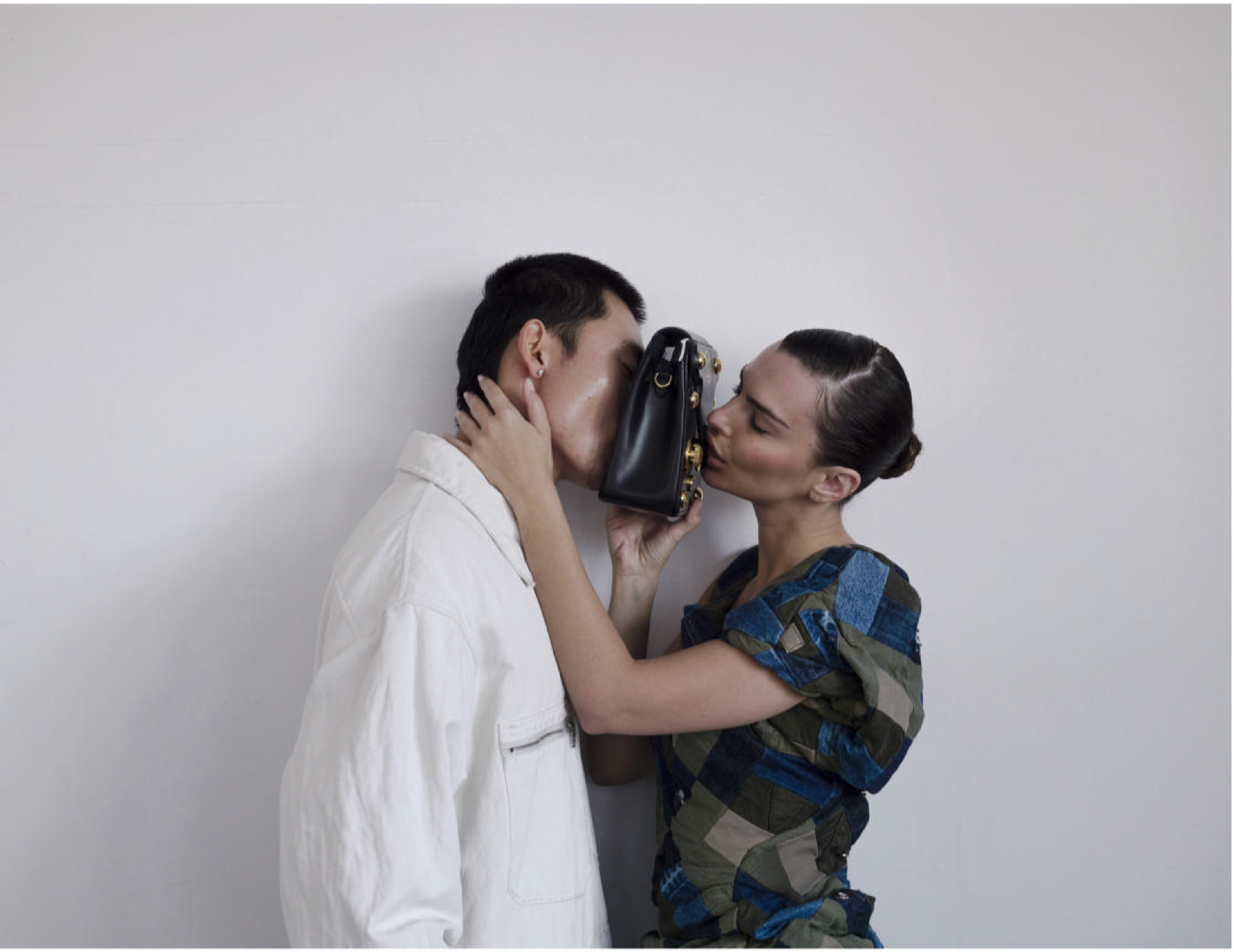
rbage

BOOM BOOM ROOM

Ratajkowski opts for low fuss but high impact in a sleek **Miu Miu** top and apron-like skirt; miumiu.com. **Junya Watanabe** boots.



CLOSE ENCOUNTER

The romantic charms of a patchwork **Marc Jacobs** dress (bergdorf goodman.com) feel nonpareil—at least until you consider the **Louis Vuitton** purse at center. (Production assistant Yu Ryan Qiu plays the would-be paramour.)

MAKING LIGHT
With help from a boxy **Givenchy** hoodie (givenchy.com), **Versace** cargo pants (versace.com), and **Junya Watanabe** boots, monochrome finds another gear or two.

EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED

Lights, camera...silvery bow-embellished **All-In** bandeau (all-in-studio.com), **Dolce & Gabbana** tank top (dolcegabbana.com), wide-leg **Maison Margiela** pants (maisonmargiela.com), and...*action.*

ATTIC STUDIOS
WARNING
Security Cameras In Use
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PRODUCED BY AP STUDIO, INC. SET DESIGN: PETER KLEIN.

CLEAN BREAK

Ratajkowski can't be contained in a bubble-gum-pink **Balenciaga** hoodie; balenciaga.com. In this story: hair, Jimmy Paul; makeup, Dick Page. Details, see In This Issue.

emily
Tide
free & gentle

Frida's World

No institution is better positioned than The Metropolitan Museum of Art to show the art of our time in the context of the past. And yet, modern work has been sorely neglected. Architect Frida Escobedo has a plan to change that.

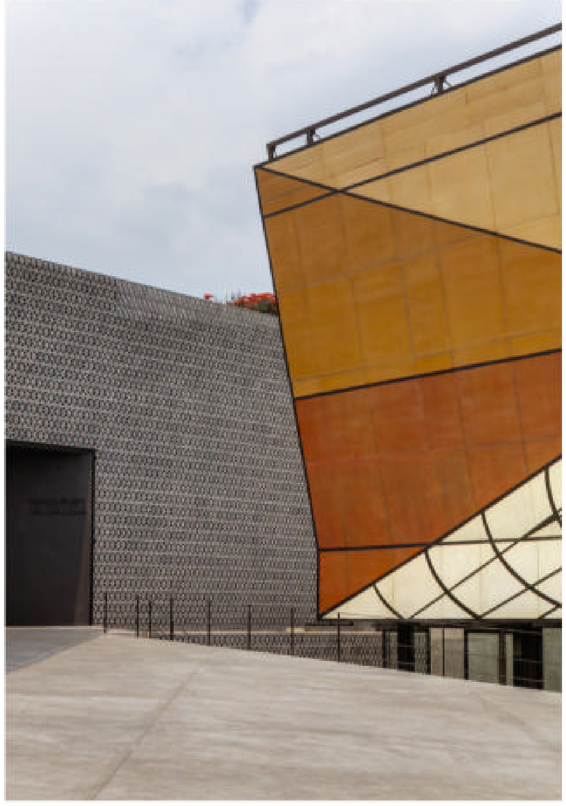
By Dodie Kazanjian. Photographed by Clément Pascal.

LET THE LIGHT IN Frida Escobedo, photographed in the skylight attic space above the European galleries at The Met, wears a Proenza Schouler shirt and pants. Tiffany & Co. necklace. Cartier ring.

Fashion Editor: Max Ortega.

The greatest museum in the Western Hemisphere, The Metropolitan Museum of Art—an encyclopedia of more than two million objects from all parts of the world—is finally, after more than 150 years, coming to terms with modern and contemporary art. Until the late 1940s, The Met simply ignored it. A few modernist works made their way into the collection, and over the years there were gifts and legacies, such as Picasso's great portrait of Gertrude Stein, that could not be refused. But The Met's anti-modernist stance held firm until 1967, when the museum got its first department of contemporary art, headed by the irrepressible curator Henry Geldzahler, in two smallish, unprepossessing rooms on the second floor. Two decades later, modern and contemporary art established an entire wing of its own, partially financed by *Reader's Digest* cofounder and philanthropist Lila Acheson Wallace, with 40,000 square feet of gallery space. But when it opened, this space did more to highlight the gaps in The Met's pitifully inadequate collection than showcase its few modern treasures.

That's no longer the case. A flurry of astute buying has taken place, and many generous gifts have come in, raising The Met's modern and contemporary collection to the level of the holdings in its 16 other departments. Among them are Leonard Lauder's 2013 donation, which erased the yawning gap in Cubist paintings; 57 works of African American art from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation, in 2014; and the gift of 220 Philip Gustons by his daughter, Musa Mayer, last year. But the shortcomings of the Wallace Wing—not enough gallery space, isolation from the rest of the museum, poor circulation—became increasingly evident, and in 2015, the renowned British architect David Chipperfield was commissioned to demolish the wing and build a new one from scratch. Soaring costs, a change of directors at The Met, and a host of other problems put the project on hold. Max Hollein, the new director whose strong belief in contemporary art was no secret, invited five architects (including Chipperfield) to come up with a new plan. When the result was announced a year ago, no one was more surprised than the winner, a 42-year-old Mexican architect named Frida Escobedo. For Escobedo, it was one of those moments that can change the trajectory of an architect's career.



ACUTE ANGLES

Examples of Escobedo's work, including, from top, La Tallera cultural center in Cuernavaca (2012), the Hotel Boca Chica (2010), and her Serpentine installation (2018).

FROM TOP: LA TALLERA, PHOTOGRAPHED BY RAFAEL GAMO, 2010. HOTEL BOCA CHICA, PHOTOGRAPHED BY UNDINE PRÖHL, 2008. SERPENTINE PAVILION, PHOTOGRAPHED BY RAFAEL GAMO, 2018.

On a rainy Wednesday in January when the museum was closed, Escobedo and I met for lunch in the Patrons Lounge at The Met. She's a striking young woman, tall and slim with long black hair, a wide smile, and prominent Frida Kahlo–like eyebrows. Stylishly dressed, she's wearing super-wide-leg black pants with a matching oversized jacket by Bottega Veneta and a bright red sweater by The Row. "The Met knew my firm was doing a residential project in Harlem, and they sent me an email saying they were expanding their portfolio of architects for their files, and could I come in," Escobedo tells me in her soft-spoken voice. "I thought, Well, of course. I never imagined it was about redoing a wing. So I came in and had a 40-minute meeting with Max Hollein, just sharing ideas. A few weeks later I received an invitation: 'Would you like to participate in this competition?' Another surprise. Of course I said yes. I never imagined that I would be competing against Pritzker Prize winners and very established firms."

Hollein, whose father was the world-famous architect Hans Hollein, put the five competitors through an unusual process. "We worked with each of the companies simultaneously for five months, as if we were already the client," Hollein says. At the end, they all presented design proposals. "But it was also a competition about the working method, and the way we would like to engage in a complex project that we knew would take six to seven years." What led The Met to take such a big risk on a little-known architect who had never done anything on this scale—a $500 million wing with 80,000 square feet of gallery space, twice the capacity of the old one—for one of the world's most beloved museums? "She has a deep understanding of how architecture functions like a public space—and that clearly comes

HIGH PROFILE

Escobedo, on a balcony at The Met, wears a Dries Van Noten blazer, shirt, skirt, and earring. In this story: hair, Ilker Akyol; makeup, Kuma. Details, see In This Issue.

out of a Mexican tradition," Hollein tells me. "What I find so striking about Frida is that she is very much connected to the artistic environment in our time. She creates enormously elegant and powerful spaces with a deep sensitivity for light and material. She really understands the museum as a communal space."

Doubts of whether The Met could raise the money for its new wing disappeared in 2021, when longtime Met trustee Oscar Tang and his wife, Agnes Hsu-Tang, pledged $125 million, the largest capital gift The Met had ever received, to help fund it. Hollein used Escobedo's appointment to announce triumphantly, in an interview with *The New York Times,* that The Met's modern and contemporary "collection will continue to grow more significantly than any other area."

Escobedo had appeared on the radar of many people in the art community, including me, in 2018, when she was selected to design that year's Serpentine Pavilion in London's Kensington Gardens. Since 2000, this commission has gone every year to an architect selected by the Serpentine's artistic director, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and other members of the Serpentine's team. Escobedo had met Obrist when he sat down with her on a trip to Mexico. A few years later, she received an email from the Serpentine that she dismissed as marketing. "Then I received a second one: 'Did you receive this previous email? We're inviting you to design the pavilion.'" Like the call from The Met, this was a huge surprise. "I started working on a proposal right away."

Escobedo's winning design in London took the form of the enclosed courtyards in so many Mexican houses. Its walls, instead of being adobe, were made of ordinary English cement roof tiles, stacked in a staggered fashion, with gaps between them to let in light and air. It was like a compendium of Escobedo's architectural style, using ordinary local materials to achieve a kind of porosity, one of her favorite words, implying the ability to see through things and hint at what's on the other side. "It's not about transparency, where you see everything right away," she says. "Porosity allows mystery. There are other layers, moments of invitation, moments of slight distance, moments of engaging you or forcing you to become more focused." The architect David Adjaye, who joined the Serpentine's board in 2016, tells me that the walls in Escobedo's Pavilion "were like breathing walls in the tropics." He adds, "She very directly took people to Mexico. She was playing with the idea of Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion—to change the way you see the world around you. What was powerful was that she basically shut off the view to the park and to the Serpentine, and created her own world." Adjaye says that most architect contenders "talk about the relationship to the trees and the building and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 128

PRODUCED BY 2DM PRODUCTION.

Truth and Consequences

The Broadway revival of *Parade*—starring Ben Platt and Micaela Diamond—couldn't come at a more timely moment. Leslie Camhi explores the urgent new production. Photographed by Norman Jean Roy.

JUSTICE LEAGUE
Diamond, in Christopher John Rogers, and Platt, in a costume designed by Susan Hilferty, play a husband-and-wife team fighting a wrongful conviction. Fashion Editor: Max Ortega.

I'm generally an anxious person," admits Ben Platt, who was just off the plane from Sundance when we spoke. "But I find I can channel that pretty well into the characters I play," he adds. That's an understatement for the actor whose jittery, star-making turn in the title role of *Dear Evan Hansen* helped jump-start a national debate on adolescent mental health, and who returns to Broadway this spring in a much-lauded revival of the 1998 musical *Parade.*

Set in the early-20th-century Jim Crow South, *Parade* is based upon the true story of Leo Frank, a Cornell-educated Brooklyn Jew who moved to Atlanta, married Lucille Selig—a daughter of the city's close-knit, well-off German Jewish community—and became superintendent of the National Pencil Company factory. In 1913, when the body of a 13-year-old worker named Mary Phagan was discovered in the factory's basement, suspicion for the white girl's murder initially fell upon a Black night watchman, Newt Lee, and the "Negro sweeper," Jim Conley. But botched police work, a public prosecutor with overweening political ambitions, and sensationalized reports in the local press combined to whip the public into a vicious prejudicial frenzy—against Yankees, northern industrialists, and Jews. In this inflamed and tainted atmosphere, Frank became the prime suspect, was tried, and sentenced to death by hanging. When, after two years of failed legal appeals, Georgia governor John Slaton commuted Frank's sentence to life in prison, some "upstanding citizens" in Phagan's hometown of Marietta, Georgia, abducted Frank from his jail cell and lynched him.

Parade first opened in 1998, with Broadway legend Harold Prince as director and cocreator. Pulitzer Prize–winning playwright Alfred Uhry (*Driving Miss Daisy*) won a Tony for the book (which takes some liberties with the historical record), as did the musical's 20-something composer, Jason Robert Brown, for his complex and layered score. But reviews were mixed, and audiences, possibly lured by the play's title into expecting something celebratory, were confused. Today, perhaps, we're more primed for a musical of ideas exploring one of the darkest chapters in our nation's history.

Uhry, who is 86, grew up in Atlanta's German Jewish community—his great-uncle owned the pencil factory where Phagan and Frank worked. "Nobody would talk about the Leo Frank case," he recalls on the phone from his apartment on the Upper West Side. "I remember being a little kid, one time when my parents had company over and somebody brought up Leo Frank, and one of the men at the gathering just got up and walked out of the room." The unspoken trauma of the case and its murderous aftermath could not be laid to rest.

It also reverberated across the nation, as a defining moment in both the American Jewish experience and race relations. The murders of Phagan and Frank lent urgency to the newly created Anti-Defamation League—founded in 1913 with the mission "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment for all"—but also galvanized a revival of the Ku Klux Klan. (Klan activity had declined in the decades following Reconstruction, but in 1915, organizers seeking to reinvigorate it—inspired also by D. W. Griffith's 1915 silent film, *The Birth of a Nation*—aligned with the Marietta-based Knights of Mary Phagan, a group that had sworn vengeance for the child's murder.)

It's dire and heady material for a Broadway musical, but *Parade* finds beauty and solace in its story of a marriage, and in the interior transformations of Leo and Lucille. They begin the play closed off from each other but find love and understanding through their evolving ordeal.

For Micaela Diamond, the multitalented, pre-Raphaelite beauty who plays Lucille Frank, the musical opens a window onto a little-known chapter of history. "In America, we hear so much about the Holocaust, but *Parade* is about an antisemitism that is earlier—a homegrown and specifically American-flavored form of hatred," she says, when we meet over coffee at an Upper West Side café. Diamond, who is Jewish, grew up attending a Conservative synagogue in Margate, New Jersey, and got the call that she had landed her first Broadway role, as the young Cher in

The Cher Show, while on a Birthright trip to Israel during the summer after her graduation from Manhattan's LaGuardia High School.

For her, the character of Lucille—a would-be Southern belle who finds the strength to step beyond the limits of that vexed ideal—allows us to explore the complex ways in which racism and antisemitism are intertwined. "Lucille, like so many Jews before and after her, is white until she is undeniably Jewish," Diamond explains, "and she has to confront that reality, both in her husband and in herself."

Lucille is also "one of the great roles for Jewish women in musical

TRIAL BY FIRE
Diamond in Chloé and Platt in Prada. In this story: hair, Ilker Akyol; makeup, Kuma; grooming, Melissa Dezarate. Details, see In This Issue.

PRODUCED BY THE CANVAS AGENCY.

theater—though it's quite a short list," Diamond says, citing Fanny in *Funny Girl,* Carole King in *Beautiful,* and Golde and her three older daughters in *Fiddler on the Roof.* "This production is the first time that two Jewish actors have been cast as Leo and Lucille," she notes. "And I think there is a deeper awareness in our culture now, where we're beginning to ask the question, Why aren't Jewish people telling their own stories?"

In October 2021, actor and comedian Sarah Silverman used her podcast to call out what she called Hollywood's "Jewface" problem—the very frequent casting of non-Jewish actors to portray characters whose Jewishness is central to their identity, such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg (played onscreen by Felicity Jones in *On the Basis of Sex*), Miriam Maisel (Rachel Brosnahan in *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*), and others. (A more recent example: Michelle Williams's Oscar-nominated portrayal of a character based on Steven Spielberg's mother in *The Fabelmans.*) The podcast struck a chord with many. Because while it's true that Jews come in all shapes, colors, and sizes—and there's no lack of Jewish acting talent—Hollywood in particular has trouble imagining beautiful, sexy, and heroic Jewish women playing explicitly Jewish roles.

For Platt, who describes himself now as "culturally Jewish" but who was raised in a religiously observant household in Los Angeles, "Leo is the first character I've played whose Judaism is intrinsic to the role," he says. It's also his first depiction of a historical personage. That involves "an added level of responsibility," he says, "in how I am representing him to the world."

It can be a challenge, he explains, "when someone becomes a martyr to history and a symbol, to really understand CONTINUED ON PAGE 129

Demna on the Record

The Balenciaga artistic director addresses the brand's ad campaign controversy and charts his way forward. Photographed by Malick Bodian.

In November of last year, Balenciaga released two advertising campaigns: one to promote its holiday offering, called Gift Shop; the other, which appeared five days later, in support of its Spring 2023 collection, which had been shown at the New York Stock Exchange some months earlier.

Within days of its publication, the social media reaction to the Gift Shop campaign rapidly went from a trickle to a storm: Critics condemned the house for showing children holding bags designed to look like destroyed teddy bears, with studs and harnesses, amid an array of grown-up items before them—a Balenciaga-branded wine glass, for example. Many felt the bags referenced BDSM, and that their presence on the shoot was an abhorrent sexualization of children. (The bags had been shown in October during Paris Fashion Week, and were carried by adults; Balenciaga stated the design reference was not BDSM, but punk.)

Days later, the Spring 2023 campaign was published, and internet sleuthing revealed the presence of three props that added to the furor: a printout from the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *United States v. Williams*—which confirmed that First Amendment rights did not include the promotion of child pornography—half visible from beneath a Balenciaga handbag; a book by the Belgian artist Michaël Borremans, whose work has stirred controversy, particularly around sinister-seeming images of toddlers playing in ways that appear disturbed, deranged, or violent (though the book in the campaign did not contain such work); and a fake framed college certificate on a wall bearing a name that, when googled, brought up the identities of many real people, including that of a convicted child abuser.

Balenciaga withdrew both campaigns, denied the allegations of promoting child abuse through its images, and, in the case of the Spring 2023 ads, launched a $25 million lawsuit against those contracted to do set design and shoot production. On November 28, the house apologized for what it called "a series of grievous errors for which Balenciaga takes responsibility."

"We strongly condemn child abuse," the statement continued. "It was never our intent to include it in our narrative.... We take full accountability for our lack of oversight and control of the documents in the background and we could have done things differently."

A few days later, on December 2, artistic director Demna (he has chosen to go by a single name since 2021) issued a statement, saying in part: "I want to personally apologize for the wrong artistic choice of concept for the gifting campaign with the kids and I take my responsibility. It was inappropriate to have kids promote objects that had nothing to do with them. As much as I would sometimes like to provoke a thought through my work, I would NEVER have an intention to do that with such an awful subject as child abuse that I condemn."

In a statement to *Vogue,* Balenciaga's president and CEO, Cédric Charbit, elaborated: "The artistic director oversees the creative. I take all the business decisions, have the final cut and responsibility. In between there are many steps, in terms of creation and validation, and several teams are involved in a collaborative way. All this was unintentional, but we collectively failed. I made the wrong judgment and take responsibility. We all learned from this and have taken actions and changed our ways of working so this never happens again." Charbit also outlined specific actions: The house is undergoing internal reorganization, he said, implementing new editorial controls and educational programs, and would begin a listening tour with advocacy groups whose work is aimed at protecting children. Charbit also indicated that the lawsuit was being dropped. When later asked by *Vogue* about that, Balenciaga responded: "Our investigation revealed that there was no setup or malevolent act, at which point we immediately discontinued the action."

On February 8, Balenciaga and the Kering Foundation announced a three-year partnership with National Children's Alliance (NCA) on its recently launched Mental Health Institute. The aims, Balenciaga said, are helping children heal from trauma, and for NCA to work with the house on educating itself about child protection.

Vogue asked Demna about all of this during a series of lengthy conversations that took place in Paris earlier this year. What follows has been condensed and edited.

***Vogue:* The two campaigns that appeared toward the end of last year, Gift Shop and Spring 2023, which appeared within days of each other, sparked a crisis for you and for Balenciaga. What was the genesis of those campaigns? What was the creative process and intent? What conversations were happening around them?**

Demna: The Spring 2023 campaign was directly inspired by the show we did last year on Wall Street in New York City. I wanted to shoot it in a typical New York corporate setting, emphasizing the idea of power dressing. Basically, shooting a CEO-style office. I saw the example of how the offices could look, approved what type of furniture they would use, and what kind of poses the models would do. Since I am never on shoots, images were presented to me to select the photos I liked most out of the selection made by the photographer.

The Gift Shop campaign was completely unrelated to the Spring 2023 campaign—they were shot at a different time, one in October and the other one in July. The campaign was made to promote the line of objects in relation

BEYOND THE SPOTLIGHT Demna, photographed at home in Paris in January. Grooming, Inge Grognard.

to the end-of-the-year holidays. It was a large variety of unrelated products, which required a concept in which many different products could be shot all together. Kidswear was a part of the selection for the "gift shop," as well as the plush teddy bear bags, referencing punk and DIY culture, absolutely not BDSM, and they were worn by adults in the October 2022 show.

Based on this, the image team proposed the photographer for this campaign, because earlier in the year they presented his work to me and I liked the composition of his pictures, and he was added to the folder of potential talents to work with one day. Because the photographer's work often included a multitude of toys placed around a room with kids in the middle of it, we thought we would be able to include the variety of products and items of the gift shop assortment into each picture, because, you know, we can't make 100 images for all of these different products we need to show.

This is where my error comes in. That was my big mistake. I didn't realize how inappropriate it would be to put these objects [in the image] and still have the kid in the middle. It unfortunately was the wrong idea and a bad decision from me. We should not have featured kids in images that included objects that were not related and inappropriate to them. No one, myself included, raised a question of it being inappropriate. There were control processes in place, people involved—internal and external—but we just did not spot what was problematic. This was an error of judgment. I regret this a lot. We learned from this and there are going to be closer and more attentive checks and validation steps applied before any image goes out. For this I want to say I am sorry; I sincerely apologize for what happened and to anyone who has been hurt by it.

WORKING THROUGH IT

LEFT: Phoebe Waller-Bridge in Balenciaga, 2019. RIGHT: A Balenciaga Couture look in the house's atelier in 2021.

FROM LEFT: ETHAN JAMES GREEN/TRUNK ARCHIVE. ANTON CORBIJN. *VOGUE*, SEPTEMBER 2021.

The Gift Shop campaign was released online, and then there was a very critical, very angry reaction on social media—specifically to the images of children carrying the bags. What did you think of the reaction?

I realized that I really have to look at everything from a very objective point of view and imagine how it can speak to a different audience and be responsible for that. It was a reaction I would never, ever want to cause. That was the most difficult thing for me: How could I not see [the problem]? Because it is so clear to me now that it was the wrong thing to do.

I mean, I've been called terrible things, which I'm not, and Balenciaga is not. That was difficult on top of the horror of being associated with that problem [of child abuse]. These are the mistakes we have made, and we have to be responsible for them. I would never want to mess around with a subject like that. I mean, who would? And I realized that the nature of my work before this has been deemed provocative at times. And I think it also played a role in that, you know, in the way that people saw [my work]. Like it might be another stunt. But that was not the case. I had to think about what was wrong with my judgment.

The Spring 2023 campaign was released soon afterward, and three props in that provoked a lot of controversy. Some, especially on social media, have claimed they were there intentionally, and that the two campaigns were linked.

I was shocked when I heard about their presence on the set of the Spring 2023 campaign. It was a set of negligent and unfortunate but not intentional coincidences. At first, we were told the documents were confirmed to be fake. The Gift Shop campaign was different because the inappropriate nature of associating kids with those objects was clearly our mistake. When the scandal was sparked [by the documents and props], I was like, everybody, my team, was shocked. I don't know how they ended up there. They were not supposed to be there. I was completely stunned.

I have seen a lot of drama in my life, but this was particularly hard to live [through], and a mistake to learn from. It was mostly painful for me because I could not explain all of this, but also, the name of Balenciaga and the legacy of Cristóbal Balenciaga is one I cherish and have the utmost respect and fascination for. Balenciaga is a house that is over one century old and is based on strong and beautiful creative values, and I have been busy doing all in my creative power to bring it to its modern relevance, and suddenly we were under attack and labeled as something we're not at all. We certainly made a huge and stupid mistake with the gifting campaign, and we certainly have learned from it.

I could feel that the whole Balenciaga family was put into trouble. I know that many employees of the house suffered from this situation. I know also this mistake was hurtful for some people who love the brand. This experience has forced me to reevaluate a lot of things in the way I, we, work, in the way we create and communicate images, the way we interact with our audiences, and the way we learn from our mistakes and move forward.

You say that the presence of those three items in the pictures is coincidental. Can you expand on that notion of coincidence?
It's the only explanation that is plausible to me. That's the only way I can explain it. Obviously, if you look for the dots, you can connect anything, but I don't have any other explanation for it.

There will be those who agree with you that it was coincidental, and there will be those who don't. What do you say to those people who believe it was intentional?
Intentional from who? From us? What I can definitely say is that it was not intentional by me or Balenciaga. If it was intentional by someone else, I don't know.

How is Balenciaga responding to all that has happened? What kind of initiatives are you undertaking?
It starts with the restructuring of the image department and establishing new rules of checks and validations that go through multiple channels, internal and external, for the image to be checked and approved. There is now a new image board, which involves different sensibilities; before its release [the board] will give their opinion about an image.

From my personal point of view, as a creative director, I will have to question absolutely everything now. It really changes my way of working, which has previously been more instinctive; doing something that would be seen as maybe provocative just because I was thinking, Oh, that's fun. This is part of my learning: I will have a more mature and serious approach to everything I release as an idea or an image. I have decided to go back to my roots in fashion as well as to the roots of Balenciaga, which is making quality clothes—not making image or buzz.

> I have always believed that I have grown and evolved through the hardships in my life, and this has been the very biggest one.

Learning from the mistake also includes educating ourselves on this issue and contributing to the actual cause. We are partnering with a nonprofit organization called National Children's Alliance (NCA) for a multiyear partnership, which I find absolutely amazing because it will help thousands of kids in the process of overcoming trauma and dealing with their mental health. It's the one thing that makes me happy about this whole horrible situation: to do something good out of it.

From a creative point of view, how are you thinking, wanting, wishing to take Balenciaga forward?
I have always believed that I have grown and evolved through the hardships in my life, and this has been the very biggest one. What I realized of this situation is that making clothes is what makes me most happy. I was cutting and sewing garments with my team throughout most of December last year. I reconnected with where I started, and I realized the importance of it to me. It's a serious job, you know, to make clothes. It's not about creating image or buzz or any of those things. I am back to making jackets. That's where this house started, and that's where I started as a designer.

Many of those ideas [from December] will be part of the show [held earlier this month]. I had this indescribable desire to make things. I went back to cutting jackets and pants, experimenting with patterns and shapes. I cannot explain this in any other way than I sheltered myself doing what I love: making clothes. This is exactly what I will be focusing on at Balenciaga from now on. I want to be more manual and hands-on rather than just directing the process. I realized how much I miss that, and how much it makes me feel happy.

You've used the word *provocative*, and a certain amount of provocation has certainly been part of your vision for Balenciaga. Why?
The provocative aspect of my work often got misinterpreted and misunderstood, and I no longer feel like applying it to my designs. I often used some kind of wit in my design language, and it has often been deemed provocative. For me it was more about having fun and not taking fashion too seriously. Despite what many people may have suspected, the issue with the campaigns was absolutely not in any way part of my provocative design language—never, ever would I have an idea to mess around with such an awful and horrible thing as child abuse.

Your career at Balenciaga has often taken an unflinching view of the reality of the world—climate disaster, for instance—and it has also had moments that were joyful: *The Simpsons* red carpet show, say, or the "Sunglasses at Night" '80s pop video. But it has felt in the last year, perhaps less, that things have been much darker at Balenciaga—heavy, bleak.
I do think that has been the case. When we are in creative work, we cannot completely block our, maybe, inner state. How we feel about things, about pain, emotionally or psychologically, and that bleeds into our work, whether we want it to or not. There was something in me that was transmitted through the work and made people feel it too. It was always kind of there, but it was, as you say, broken up by the fun elements of something a bit lighter—let's, you know, laugh and not be so dramatic. But last year…I don't know what it is related to….

There was no specific trigger?
Maybe something from the past is coming through. It's something I can't really explain.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 130

Show of Strength

Kendall Jenner lays bare her biceps beneath tops and dresses built to move—while Ada Calhoun contemplates what her own arms have held. Photographed by Robin Galiegue.

IT'S A LONG STORY

Here's one elegant way into transitional dressing: something light (and layerable!) on top, and full, sweeping coverage down below. Kendall Jenner wears a **Ferragamo** bodysuit; ferragamo.com. OPPOSITE: **Sunspel** top; sunspel.com. **Max Mara** skirt; maxmara.com.

Fashion Editor: Kate Phelan.

When grief invades your life, the world becomes surreal—and, as in dreams, unexpected gifts begin to drop from the sky. After my father's death and my separation from my partner of more than 20 years, I received an invitation to a residency I'd applied for and then forgotten about: a month in a 15th-century castle outside of Edinburgh. The playful universe seemed to be offering recompense: *The ground is no longer solid beneath your feet. Here's a castle!*

Once there I became obsessed with arms, the body part that does not hold us up but that does just about everything else. I fondly considered them as they rested on the raw-wood desk and atop the green comforter, thought of who and what they had held and released. For the first time perhaps ever, I had nothing but space and time and someone else doing the dishes. I used it to think and stare out into the forest. The space heater chugged away, forming condensation on the windows, as I sat bundled at my desk, wearing a scarf all day, writing an entire book in a month.

As it was often sleeting, I began, daily, to do push-ups, keeping track of them on a spreadsheet alongside my word count. Two weeks in I noticed that my arms were becoming leaner and more muscular. Soaking in the ancient bathtub down the hall from my room, I admired them in the lamplight.

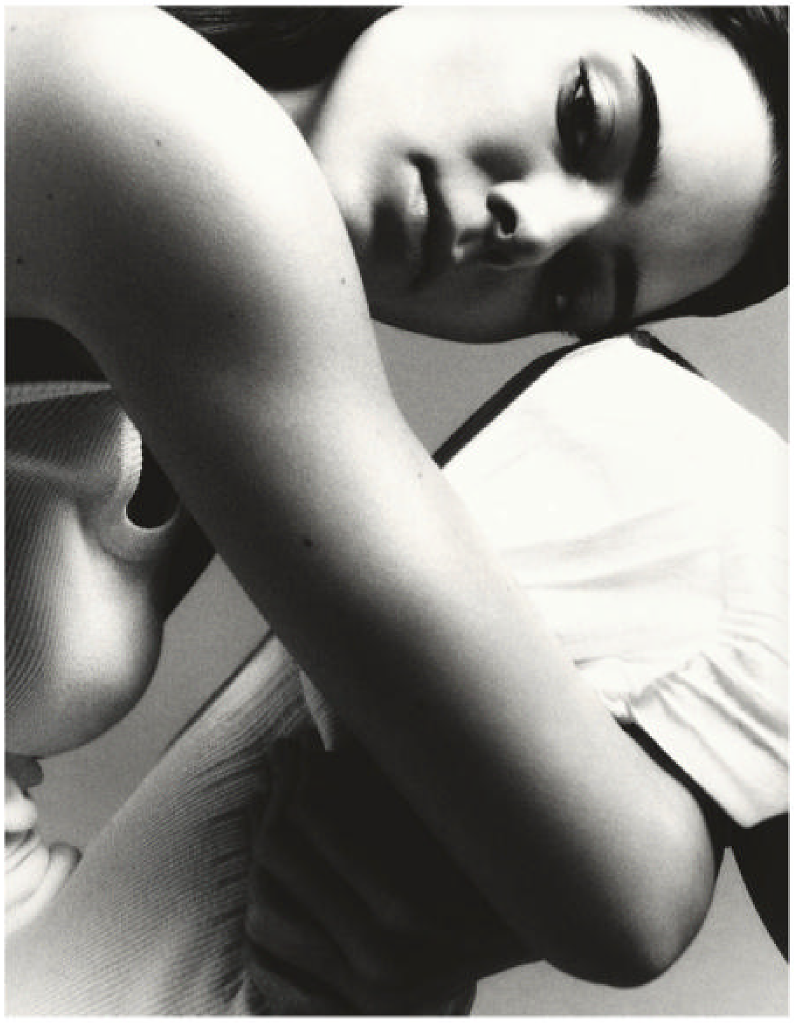
My fellow fellows, who I adored, teased me. Being British, they called push-ups "press-ups" and said it was very American to obsess over health. To defend myself I pointed out that I was keeping pace when it came to consumption of dry sherry and peated whisky.

One of the other journalists there said she did not blame me for thinking about arms so much. She'd just learned about arm Spanx and was intrigued. "Are arms the new legs?" Louisa mused.

Absolutely not, I said. Arms are just…there. Unlike legs, arms aren't even usually the focus of erotic fixation. Whoever heard of an "arm man"? If bare legs, shown off by shorts or slits, are seductive, bare arms signify fitness. Fashion displaying women's arms, as seen in these pages, testifies to strength, so it seems like sacrilege that the culture nudges us, as we age, toward the three-quarter-length sleeve, as one urges a toddler to start picking up his own toys.

"When I think of arms I think of Madonna or Michelle Obama or Jennifer Aniston, people who go to the gym," Louisa said. "Women work on their arms to look strong and healthy, which is sexy in a different way." Miniskirts are only so versatile, but bare arms can be set off by a white cotton tank top or a Fendi ensemble, like the one Kendall Jenner wears on the upcoming page.

I wondered when my arms had been as strong as they now were. The answer was twice: one was 16 years earlier, when I was a new mother. My son loved to be carried, and this seemed reasonable to me. I'd have liked to be carried, too, if it were an option. And I liked having his head near mine so we could chat. He was great company, even then. So I moved through life with him cradled in my arms and then on my hip, my forearm around his back. As he grew, it was like weight being slowly added to a barbell. At the playground in the spring, I rolled my T-shirts up to the shoulder to let the sun warm my upper arms. If an older person wanted something carried to their car, I was game. My body was strong for my son and for the world.

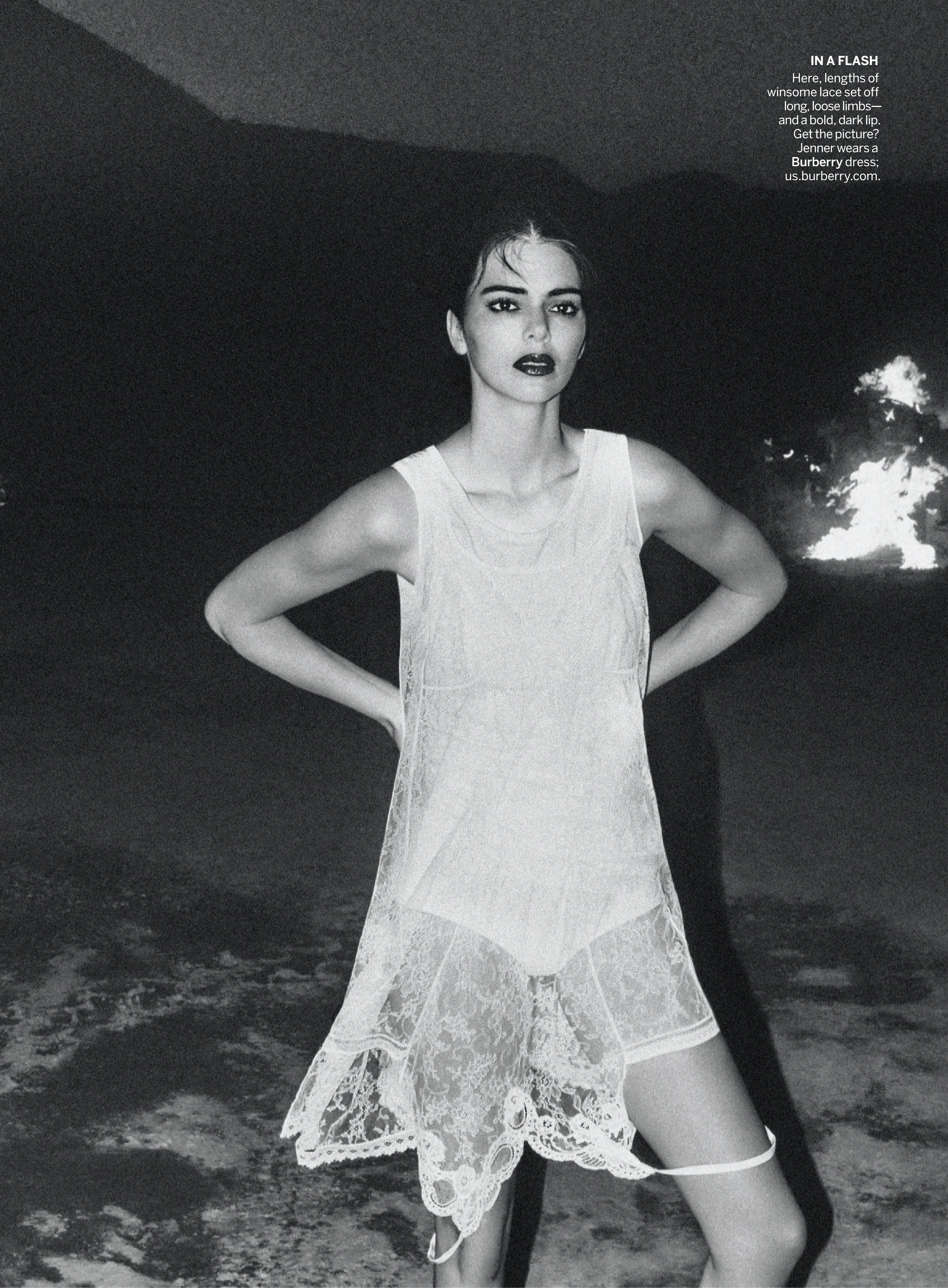


BIG BEND
Jenner wears a **Bottega Veneta** dress, top, and gently pleated skirt; bottegaveneta.com.

The other time was when I was 19. For a few weeks, I cut down scrub trees in a Swiss forest as part of a volunteer agricultural program. After hours a day of sawing, my arms were sore and covered in bramble scratches. On our lunch break, we dozen or so young people, half in love with one another, sprawled in a field and ate pieces of baguette along with cheese from a nearby farm and jagged shards of chocolate. It was the best food I've ever eaten. And we consumed it while complaining, though also really bragging, about our aching arms. One evening in Switzerland I put my newly strong arms to good effect, wrapping them around a handsome cartoonist from Sardinia. On a walk we ended up rolling around in the rain, our arms holding on tight. We showed back up at the shared house muddy and rumpled, to the amusement of our dorm mates.

My body does not have the elasticity it had in my teens or the soft strength it did when my son was a baby. But in my writer's cell, I made my arms powerful again. I returned to New York strong enough to carry furniture into my new apartment, to hug my son, now six-foot-three and almost on his own. This season, wearing sleeveless dresses, I will use my arms to loft a friend's baby over my head, to carry groceries up the stairs for hosting dinner parties and a memorial service reception. Our arms testify to the work we have done and show how prepared we are for all that we have yet to do. □

EYE CANDY
As the weather warms, set your sights on a season full of playful prints and naked shoulders. **Loewe** parka and patterned dress; loewe.com.

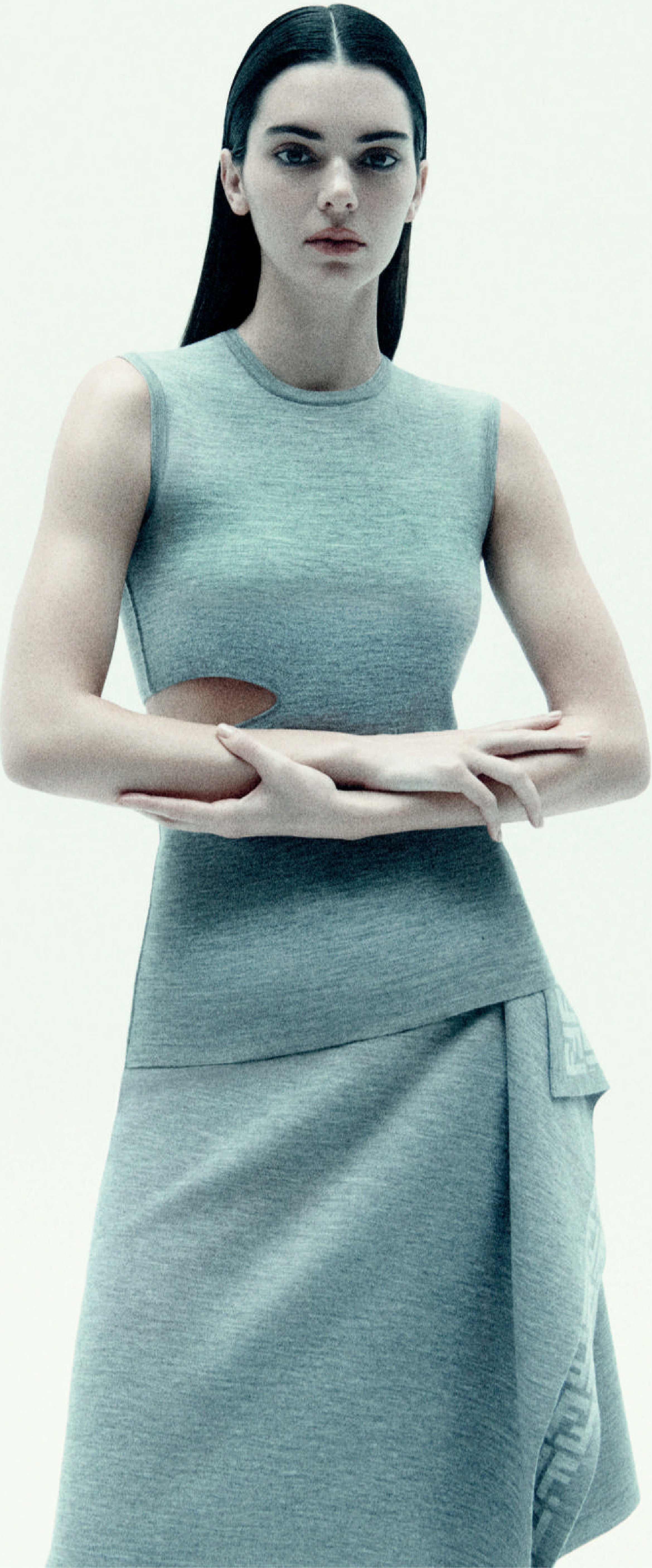


IN A FLASH

Here, lengths of winsome lace set off long, loose limbs—and a bold, dark lip. Get the picture? Jenner wears a **Burberry** dress; us.burberry.com.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD

A cutout **Fendi** top and skirt (fendi.com) add up to serious sophistication—with a sly side of something extra. In this story: hair, Lucas Wilson; makeup, Sam Visser. Details, see In This Issue.



PRODUCED BY FARAGO PROJECTS. SET DESIGN: STEVEN VALDEZ.

Eternal Sunshine

Care to take a trip? Spring's best looks—all coruscating colorways and sylphlike silhouettes—head off the beaten path in Port Antonio, Jamaica. Photographed by Nadine Ijewere.

DON'T HOLD ME BACK

OPPOSITE: Model Akon Changkou takes a dip in a **Michael Kors Collection** dress; michaelkors.com. **Leigh Miller** earring. Photographed at East Winds Cove, Port Antonio, Portland, Jamaica.

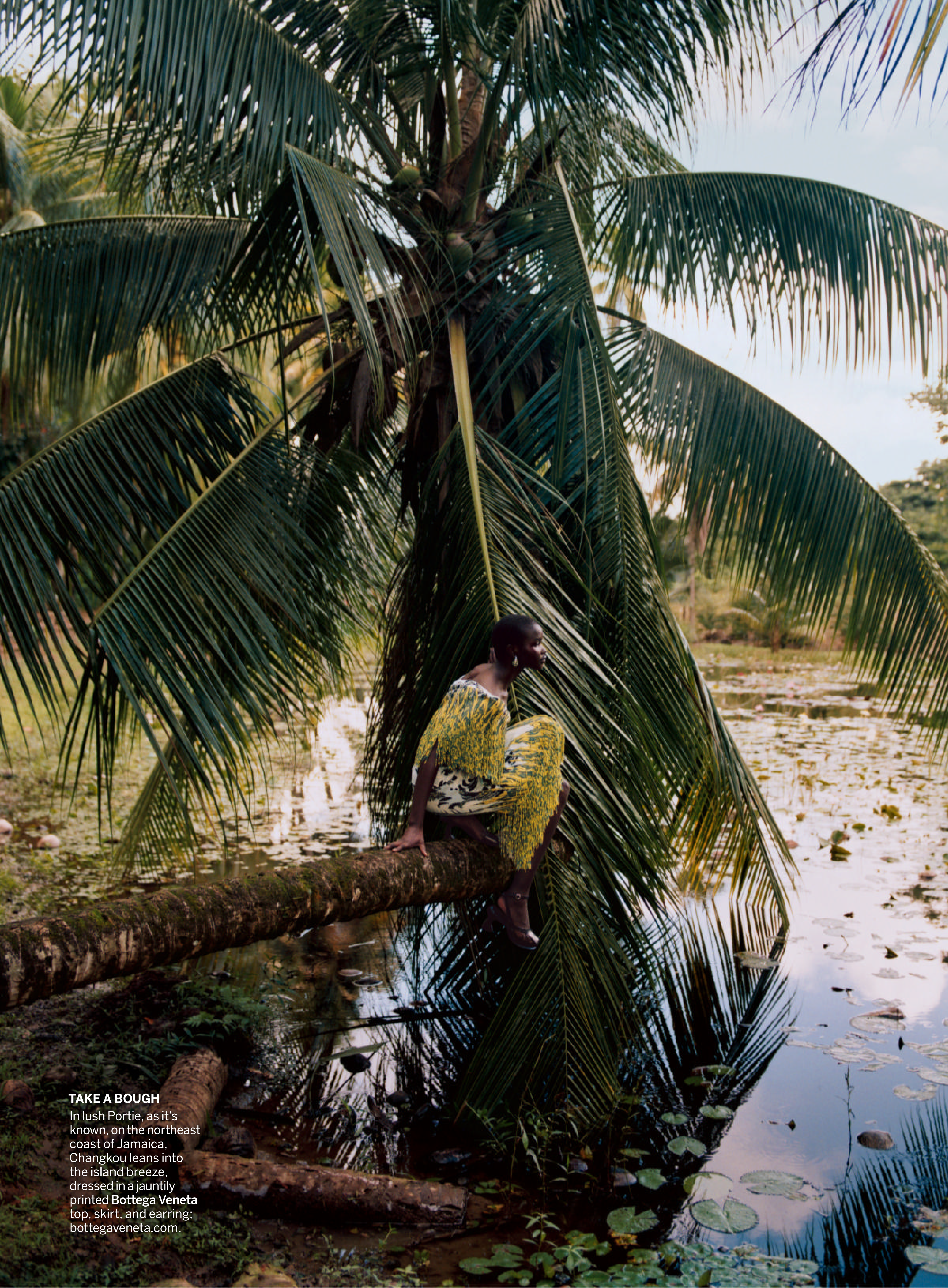
BEAUTY NOTE

Color outside the lines—and around the temples. Clinique's Cheeky Pop Blush in Pink Pop provides a buildable, long-wearing wash of rosy pigment.

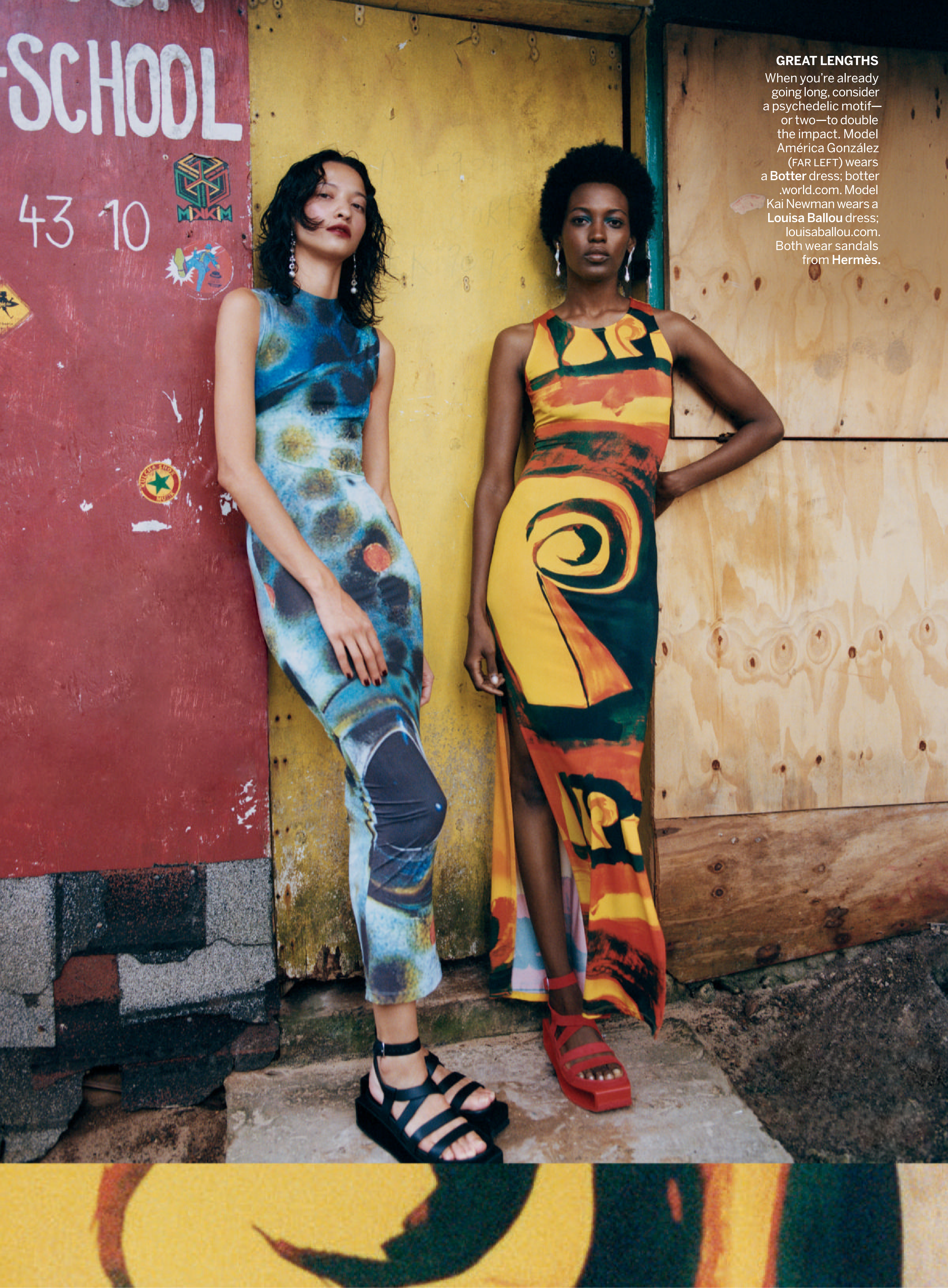
Fashion Editor: Gabriella Karefa-Johnson.

OLAF HOLLAND/ADOBE STOCK.

RIPPLE EFFECT
Alive with the textures of the crashing sea, a **Louis Vuitton** tank top and pants (select Louis Vuitton boutiques) feel perfectly apropos—or, dare we say it, topically tropical?

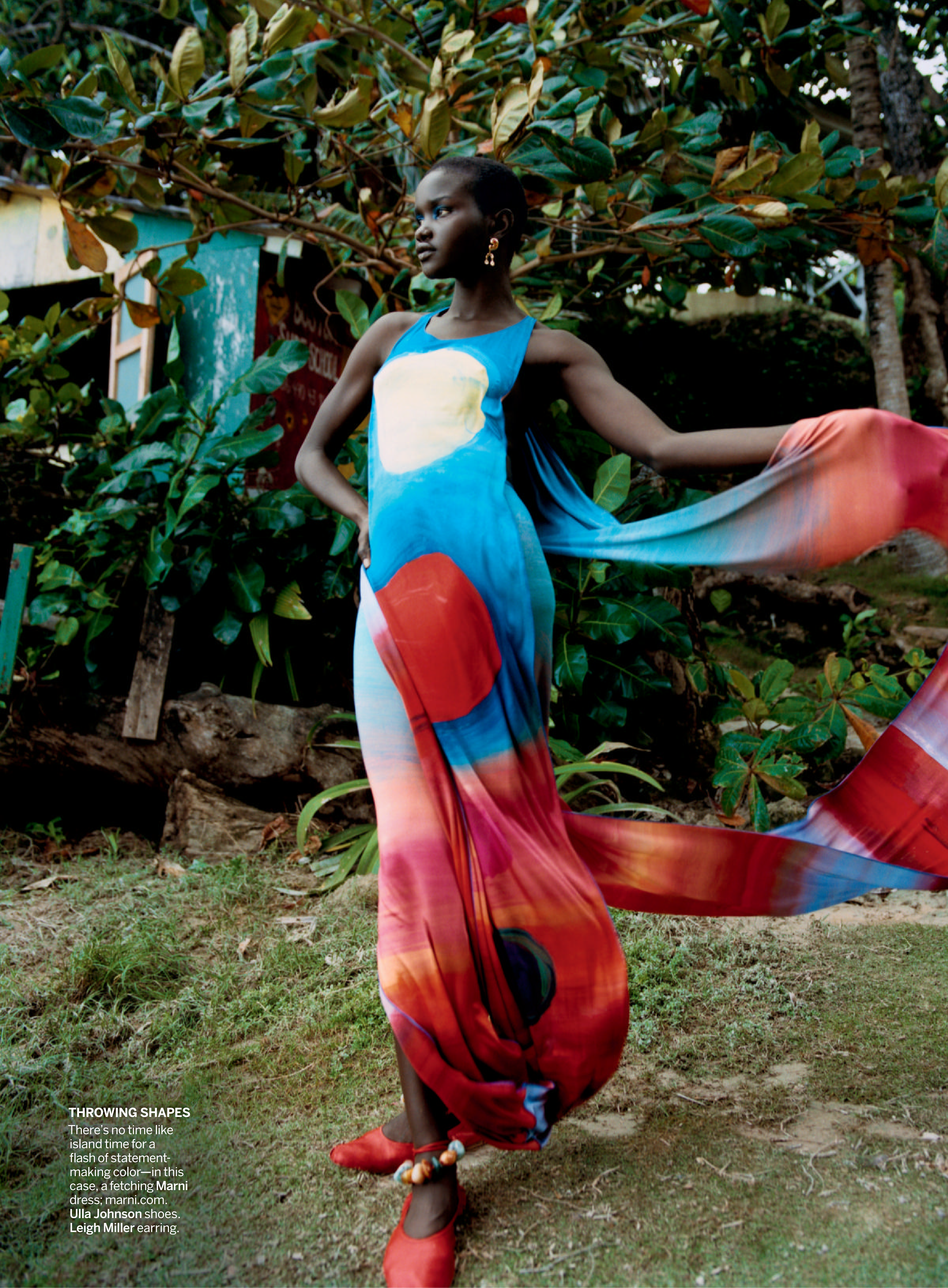


TAKE A BOUGH
In lush Portie, as it's known, on the northeast coast of Jamaica, Changkou leans into the island breeze, dressed in a jauntily printed **Bottega Veneta** top, skirt, and earring; bottegaveneta.com.

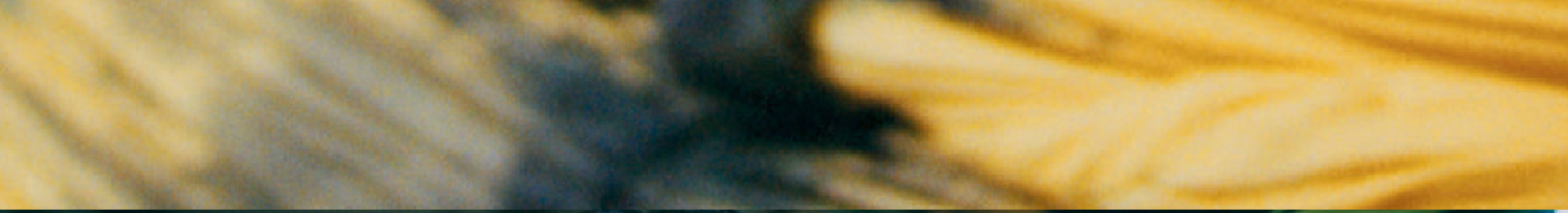


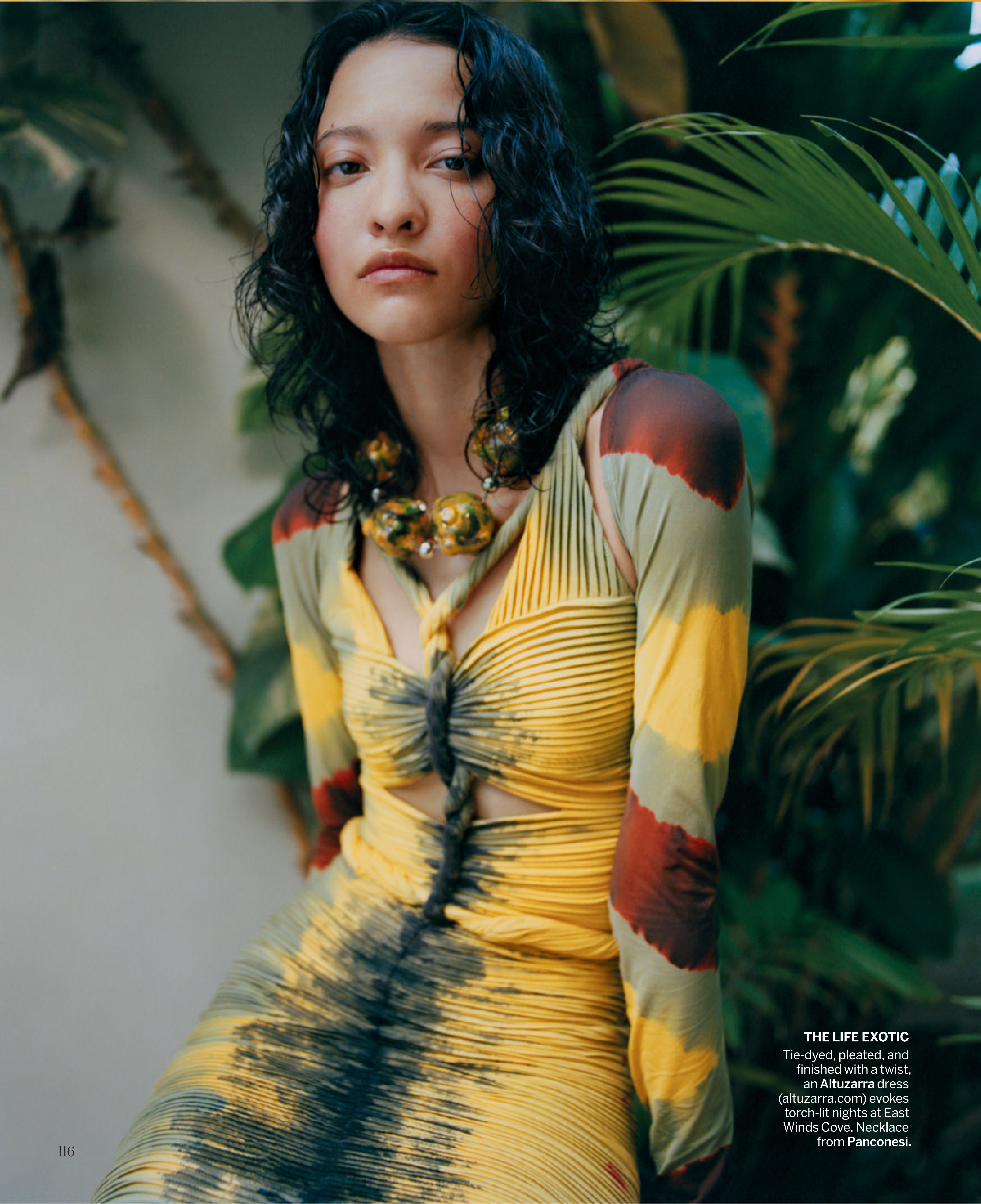
GREAT LENGTHS

When you're already going long, consider a psychedelic motif—or two—to double the impact. Model América González (FAR LEFT) wears a **Botter** dress; botter.world.com. Model Kai Newman wears a **Louisa Ballou** dress; louisaballou.com. Both wear sandals from **Hermès.**



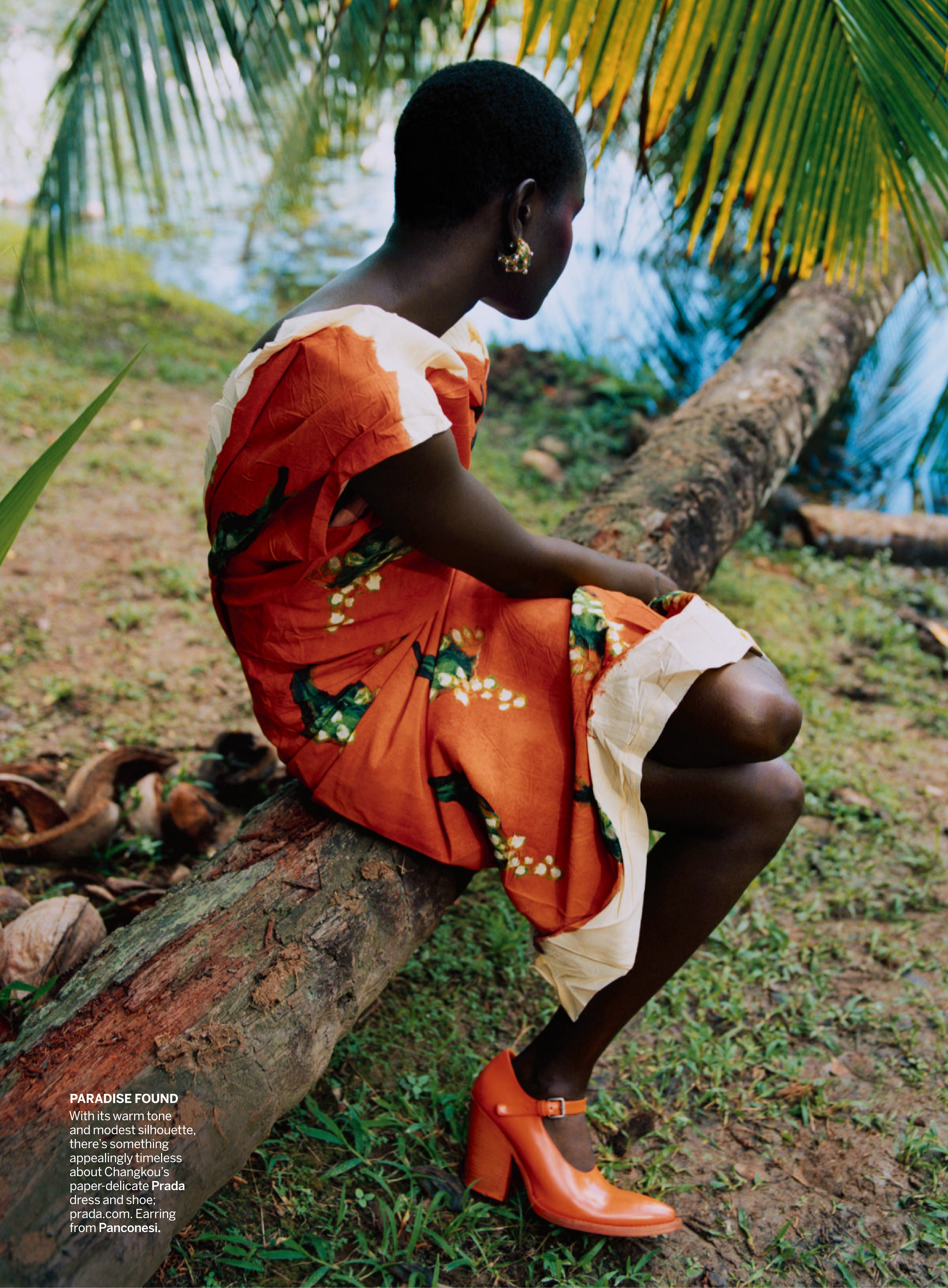
THROWING SHAPES
There's no time like island time for a flash of statement-making color—in this case, a fetching **Marni** dress; marni.com. **Ulla Johnson** shoes. **Leigh Miller** earring.



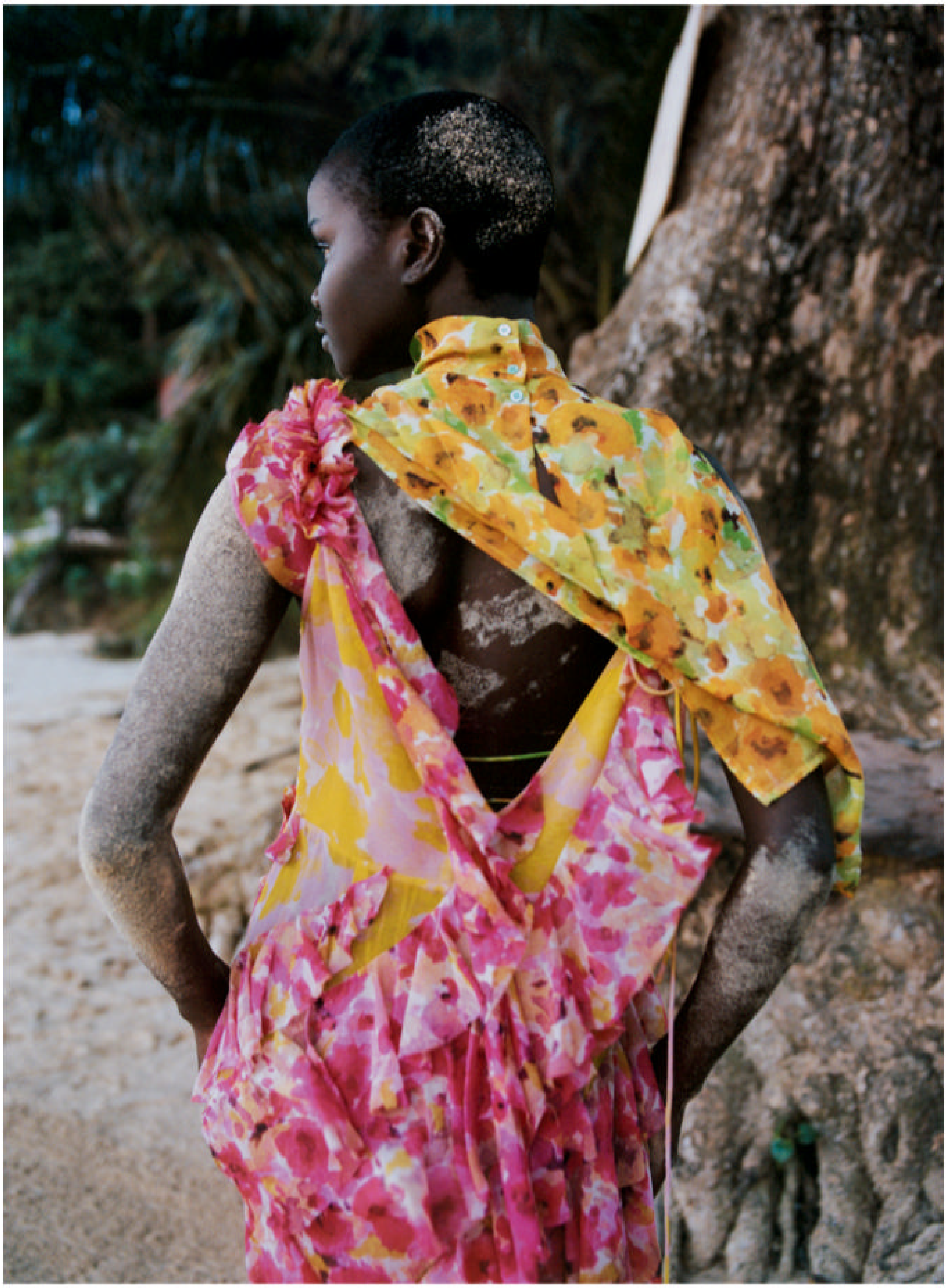


THE LIFE EXOTIC

Tie-dyed, pleated, and finished with a twist, an **Altuzarra** dress (altuzarra.com) evokes torch-lit nights at East Winds Cove. Necklace from **Panconesi.**



PARADISE FOUND
With its warm tone and modest silhouette, there's something appealingly timeless about Changkou's paper-delicate **Prada** dress and shoe; prada.com. Earring from **Panconesi.**



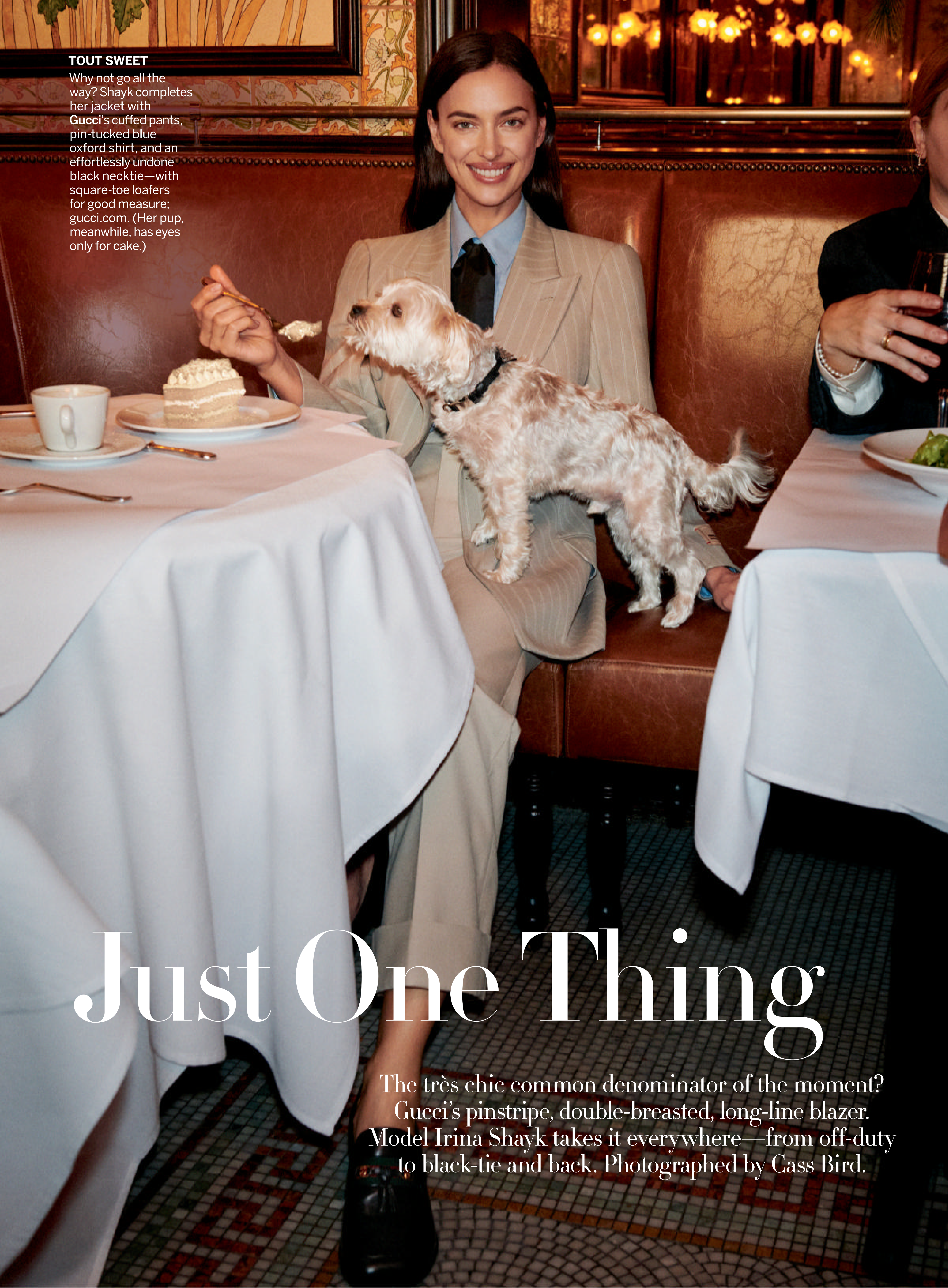
COVER TO COVER

It's almost impossible to believe, but salty sea air and a little sandy skin make the dizzyingly pretty florals of a ruffled **Dries Van Noten** dress and top (driesvannoten.com) even more beguiling. In this story: hair, Joey George; makeup, Yumi Lee. Details, see In This Issue.

OPPOSITE: GILLIANVANN/ADOBE STOCK. PRODUCED BY MAXINE WALTERS, WALTERS PRODUCTIONS.

CROSS PURPOSES
Turning heads on the street, Irina Shayk puts her **Gucci** blazer (worn throughout; gucci.com) together with a **Givenchy** bomber jacket, perfectly baggy cargo pants, and lace-up mules; givenchy.com.

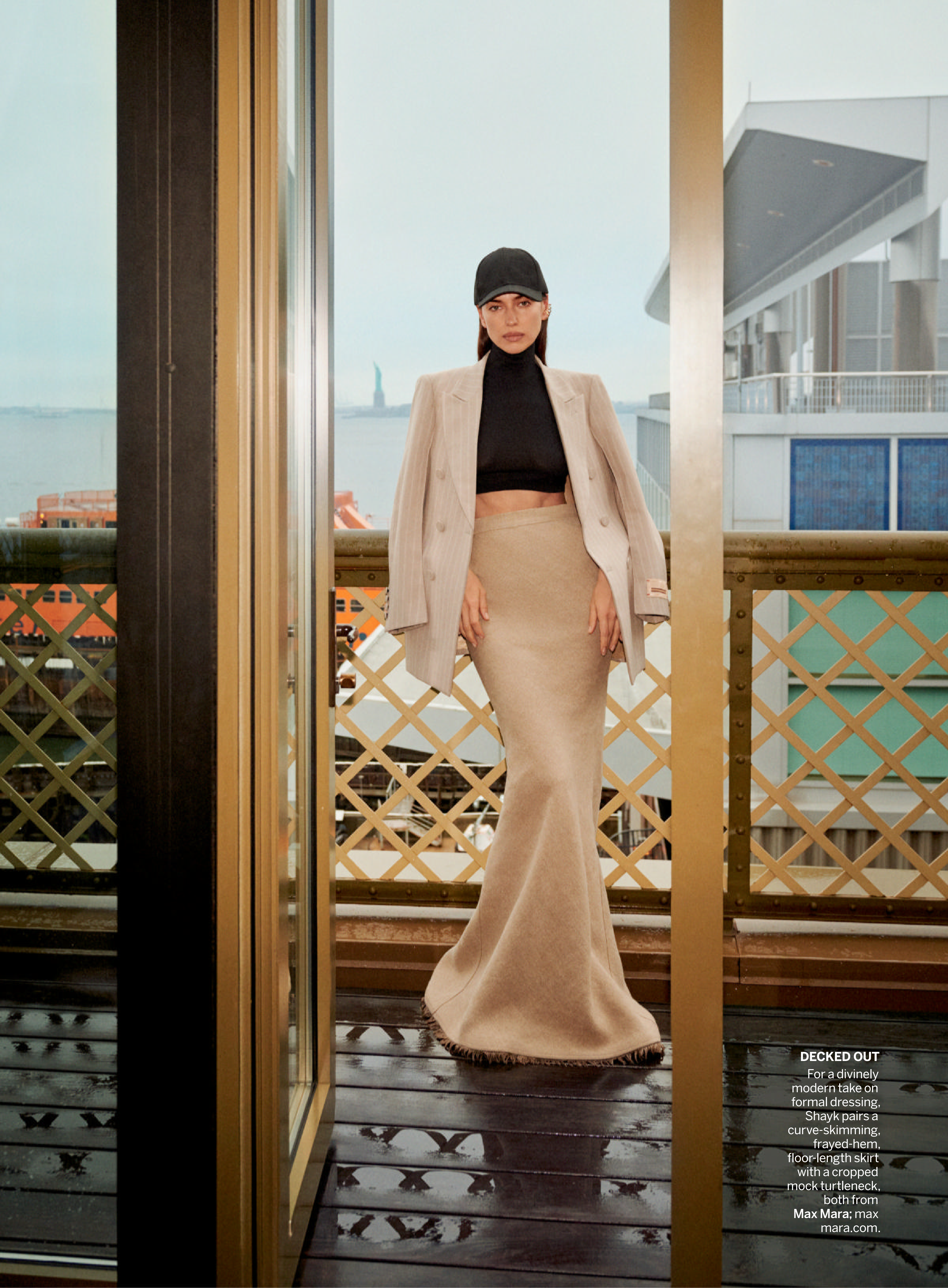
Fashion Editor: Tabitha Simmons.



TOUT SWEET
Why not go all the way? Shayk completes her jacket with **Gucci**'s cuffed pants, pin-tucked blue oxford shirt, and an effortlessly undone black necktie—with square-toe loafers for good measure; gucci.com. (Her pup, meanwhile, has eyes only for cake.)

Just One Thing

The très chic common denominator of the moment? Gucci's pinstripe, double-breasted, long-line blazer. Model Irina Shayk takes it everywhere—from off-duty to black-tie and back. Photographed by Cass Bird.



DECKED OUT
For a divinely modern take on formal dressing, Shayk pairs a curve-skimming, frayed-hem, floor-length skirt with a cropped mock turtleneck, both from **Max Mara;** maxmara.com.

BATHING BEAUTY
Crawling with vines and embroidered blooms, these pants are the perfect counter to a pale, floriated corset and white tank (all from **Dior**; select Dior boutiques). On Shayk's finger is **Ana Khouri**'s tubular pavé-diamond-encrusted ring; on her plate, a delightful serving of French toast.

STEPPED UP

In a sartorial role reversal, Shayk's blazer serves as a base layer for the lace-all-over corset from **Matty Bovan x Dolce & Gabbana** (mattybovan.com for information). **Dr. Martens** shoes.

Scan to see more from this story.

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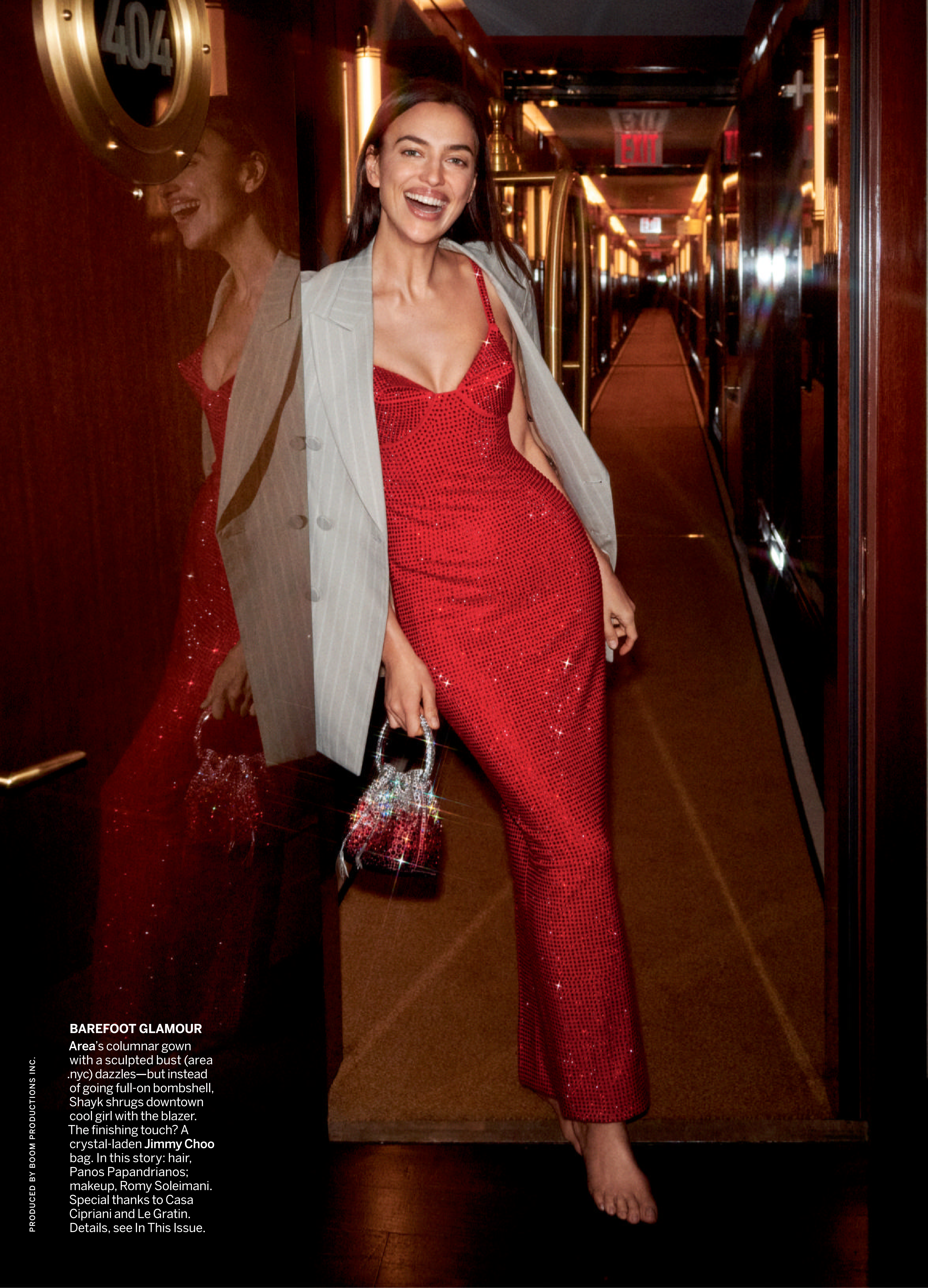

BAREFOOT GLAMOUR

Area's columnar gown with a sculpted bust (area .nyc) dazzles—but instead of going full-on bombshell, Shayk shrugs downtown cool girl with the blazer. The finishing touch? A crystal-laden **Jimmy Choo** bag. In this story: hair, Panos Papandrianos; makeup, Romy Soleimani. Special thanks to Casa Cipriani and Le Gratin. Details, see In This Issue.

PRODUCED BY BOOM PRODUCTIONS INC.

The Get

1

Tiffany & Co.
New York
2

3

High Gear

From stomping boots and weatherproof jackets to dashing (and durable!) day bags: Utilitarian separates find elevation.

7

5

Dooney & Bourke
6

4

8

9

10

11

12

ADUT AKECH: JOSH OLINS, *VOGUE*, 2019. PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF BRANDS/WEBSITES.

1. FERRAGAMO BAG, $2,500; FERRAGAMO.COM. **2.** TIFFANY & CO. NECKLACE; TIFFANY.COM. **3.** SIMONE ROCHA BOMBER COAT; MODAOPERANDI.COM. **4.** DIOR BOOT, $1,990; DIOR BOUTIQUES. **5.** ROLEX WATCH, ROLEX.COM FOR INFORMATION. **6.** DOONEY & BOURKE BACKPACK, $398; DOONEY.COM. **7.** BRUNELLO CUCINELLI PANTS; SHOP .BRUNELLOCUCINELLI.COM. **8.** FENDI CAP, $920; FENDI.COM. **9.** CARTIER EARRINGS; CARTIER BOUTIQUES. **10.** LORO PIANA JACKET; LOROPIANA .COM. **11.** COACH DRESS, $1,400; COACH.COM. **12.** RALPH LAUREN COLLECTION BAG; RALPHLAUREN.COM. **SHOP THE ISSUE ONLINE AT VOGUE.COM/SHOPPING**

BEGIN AGAIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 77

Delevingne understands that the road to recovery has no end point. Ultimately, the most important person to hold her to account right now is herself. "I've had interventions of a sort, but I wasn't ready. That's the problem. If you're not face-first on the floor and ready to get up again, you won't. At that point," she says, referring to her wake-up call this fall, "I really was." Delevingne checked herself into rehab late last year, knowing that she needed therapeutic support. "I hadn't seen a therapist in three years," she says. "I just kind of pushed everyone away, which made me realize how much I was in a bad place. I always thought that the work needs to be done when the times are bad, but actually the work needs to be done when they're good. The work needs to be done consistently. It's never going to be fixed or fully healed but I'm okay with that, and that's the difference."

Perhaps the most life-affirming decision she's made in the last year has been committing to the 12-step program. "Before I was always into the quick fix of healing, going to a weeklong retreat or to a course for trauma, say, and that helped for a minute, but it didn't ever really get to the nitty-gritty, the deeper stuff. This time I realized that 12-step treatment was the best thing, and it was about not being ashamed of that. The community made a huge difference. The opposite of addiction is connection, and I really found that in 12-step."

Other changes she's making are incremental and cautious. "It's the small things, because, my God, I wanted to quit smoking too, but right now it's too much," she explains. "At first I was exploring all the avenues, seeing what was best for me, seeing if medication was necessary. Putting everything—work, every obligation—aside and just asking myself, What do I need in this time?" It starts by getting outside, working out, and eating three meals a day, she explains. A committed yogi since she was 18, she includes meditation and movement in her twice-daily practice. In addition to the 12-step meetings, there are weekly therapy sessions—she's found psychodrama, a form of therapy involving role-play in which a person dramatizes a personal problem, to be especially helpful.

"This process obviously has its ups and downs, but I've started realizing so much. People want my story to be this after-school special where I just say, 'Oh look, I was an addict, and now I'm sober and that's it.' And it's not as simple as that. It doesn't happen overnight…. Of course I want things to be instant—I think this generation especially, we want things to happen quickly—but I've had to dig deeper."

As for where she's headed next, Delevingne doesn't want to look too far into the future. Everything now is day by day, moment by moment, or "second by second," as she puts it. She's intent on being careful around career choices. "Work is extremely important, but work is secondary because my self-work is the most important thing," she says. That said, there are some long-term personal goals she's working toward, including motherhood. "I've wanted a kid since I was 16," says Delevingne, who hopes to freeze her eggs one day soon. "I want babies so bad. Back then I would not have been ready, of course—I just wanted to replace the need to look after my mom with a kid of my own." In the short term, she's taking time off, packing up her RV for a road trip with Leah. "I still have a lot of energy," she admits, "but it's not erratic. I'm calmer. I'm stiller."

At that moment our conversation is interrupted by an app notification flashing on her phone. "Keep your eyes open, your heart open, and your mind open today," the message reads. As she peers into the screen, I notice the tattoos on her hands. The face of a lion is etched along her right forefinger in fine inky lines. It's the first tattoo that Delevingne, a Leo, ever got, one that was an act of defiance when she first started modeling as a teenager. "At that time you couldn't get tattoos because it was part of your modeling contract, and they kind of owned your body," she explains. These days it feels more rebellious to get them removed, wipe the slate clean. And that's something on Delevingne's to-do list. "Fresh start," she says, smiling. "New beginnings." No matter the case, she's starting to feel more at home in her own skin. □

FRIDA'S WORLD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 95

the great context of London architecture. But she just gave us an architecture that said, 'Come into Frida's world.' She gave you vignettes, little glimpses to the world outside. But she wasn't trying to get you to look outside. She was trying to get you to meditate on the force of her architecture. That was so beautiful."

Frida Escobedo was born in Mexico City in 1979. Both her parents are professionals—her mother, a sociologist, worked for the National Institute for Women and is an active promoter of women's rights; her father is an ob-gyn doctor. They divorced when Frida was five but remained close to each other and to Frida. "I was an only child for many years, and I think going back and forth between them, I became a little adult very quickly," she says. When she was seven, her mother took her to New York City. It was her first time out of Mexico, and she loved it, especially The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "The main hall and all the flowers had a huge effect on me. They were so spectacular, and the idea that they would change them so often was generous and welcoming." Frida was always interested in art and drawing, but she was "too shy" to become an artist. "Art is about your feelings and your ideas," she says. "It's about yourself, and I found that a little intimidating." Her mother eventually remarried and had two more daughters—Frida was nearly 12 when the first was born. She didn't decide to study architecture until she was about to enter the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, and it was necessary to declare a major. "I chose architecture at the last minute," she says. "I was really lucky because right away I loved it—the first week I was hooked." When she graduated in 2003, she was thinking of going on to get her master's degree, but her boyfriend's mother wanted to renovate her house, and Escobedo and the boyfriend decided to do the job themselves. "Of course, we ended up doing something way bigger than she needed." A friend of theirs then asked them to design a house for him. "We did this very, very tiny house, with very little money, and it was so exciting. That was my first real project." She split up with her boyfriend, and the designer José Rojas, a longtime friend, asked her to work with him on renovating the Hotel Boca Chica in Acapulco. "It was a 1950s hotel in a very old part of Acapulco," she recalls. "José knew a lot of artists and architects. He was equally interested in fine art as well as every spontaneous thing that happened on the street. He was a very big influence for me."

A lot happened in 2010. She entered the Graduate School of Design at Harvard, which had just instituted a new program called Art, Design, and the Public Domain. The program made her think, "I should go back to something that was more related to art in the public realm—not just traditional architecture, but something less practical. I was a little worried at the time that being an independent architect was incredibly difficult for a young woman in Mexico City." At the same time, she won a competition for a pavilion at the Museo Experimental El Eco in Mexico City, and also entered a competition to expand Cuernavaca's La Tallera museum, the former home and studio of the great Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros. Of course, she got it, and spent the next two years commuting between Boston and Cuernavaca. In 2012, she graduated, La Tallera opened, and she opened her own architectural office. "It was just me and a couple of other people. It went from two people to five and then 10, and now we're 25 in Mexico City and five in New York. It really grew very organically, and has always felt like an extension of friendship and family."

In 2018, Rojas gave himself a 40th birthday dinner and seated Escobedo next to Mauricio Mesta, a young architect. They had met 10 years earlier, through Rojas, but this time, they "reconnected super fast," Mesta tells me, by Zoom from Mexico City. They've been together ever since. Mesta has his own firm, and he and Escobedo sometimes collaborate on projects, including the Galerie Nordenhake and the very popular Niddo Café, both in Mexico City. They live in an apartment building designed by Mario Pani on Paseo de la Reforma with their German pointer, Sony—he came with Mauricio. "We're practically married," she tells me, "but we haven't signed the papers." And they both want kids. "Probably just one," Escobedo says. "If I'm lucky, two—I would love to have two kids." Escobedo and Mesta like to cook and have friends for dinner, to go to the beach, and to travel together when they can, pointing out unusual architectural details. Someday they want to build or renovate a house of their own, outside of the city, and they would also love to have a weekend place in the desert of Chihuahua, where Mauricio grew up. These days, Escobedo divides her time between Mexico City and New York, where she has an apartment in the West Village. Over the Christmas holiday, when Mauricio and her family came to visit, they all went to see *Aida* (one of her favorites) at the Metropolitan Opera—"a fantastic space." She has a couple of other New York projects she's working on, but The Metropolitan Museum is her primary focus, and probably will be for six or seven years before the new wing opens.

After lunch in the Patrons Lounge, we walk for what seems like miles to the modern and contemporary wing. The museum is closed to the public on Wednesdays, so we have it largely to ourselves. Escobedo has a field office here, a few doors away from Hollein's, and a lot of her ideas come from walking the halls before the place opens and after hours. "My first thoughts were that this wing is quite isolated," she says. "It feels like a separate part of the museum, and the question is, how can we integrate it more?" Not so long ago, a lot of people, including some of The Met's trustees, wondered why The Met should collect and show contemporary art at all, when three other New York museums (the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney, and the Guggenheim) focus on it exclusively. The answer, of course, was that no other institution could show the art of our time in the context of what Hollein calls "a more global perspective of art and culture through the ages." Hollein, who has architecture in his blood, is taking a personal interest in the developing concept. Escobedo and her team have been working on it since October, paying close attention to Hollein and to David Breslin, the new head of modern and contemporary art at The Met, and the curators in his department—and also to the curators in many other departments—listening, learning, and digesting their ideas. "What makes The Met, The Met?" she asks. "That's a big question for me right now." She will present the design concept in June.

Hollein agrees with Escobedo that the modern and contemporary wing has to connect with the rest of the museum, and also with Central Park, which is currently completely closed off from the existing wing. Escobedo remembers lunch in the Petrie Court when she was a child. "It was one of my favorite moments, because we could take a break and see the park," she tells me. "We need more spaces that allow you to be in contact with the park, and with natural light. There's a rhythm in the museum. You go from compression to more open spaces. It has a cadence and a rhythm, but I feel the rhythm is interrupted in the contemporary wing right now."

Her vision includes a plan to alter somewhat the orientation of the building. "Right now, the building is facing just one way, Fifth Avenue—the grand staircase, the Great Hall, and you can go in three directions to Egypt, to Greece, and to Europe. It's not that you're going to be able to enter from the park, but there needs to be a signal that the museum is open to the west, too. It's a completely different mood. It's not just the grand stairs. You're seeing The Met through the lens of now. There should be a different kind of softness and generosity to the park, visually, from the building."

"How are you going to do that?" I ask.

"Good question," she says, laughing. "I have some ideas, but I'm not going to share them. We'll see in seven years." □

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 99

who they were." In *Parade,* Leo starts out "difficult and unlikable, he has a lot of hubris, and he's very guarded. It's his relationship with his wife which allows that to unravel a bit, so that we see some of the humanity and warmth," Platt says. "But I like that he doesn't need to be presented as this perfect person, for us all to agree that there was a systemic failure in the way the country and the legal system handled him."

For that, he also has Diamond to help. "She's wonderful in this," he says. "It doesn't take you long to feel that she's on the path to something really big. She has this special energy that people want to be around. It's also very meaningful to me that we are both just about the ages that Lucille and Leo were at that time, and that we were both raised Jewish." A lot of the experiences he's had—in *Dear Evan Hansen,* for example, or on television in *The Politician*—"have been me out on a limb," he says. "So it's nice here to have a partner in crime."

Was Leo Frank guilty of murder? Absolutely not, say Platt, Diamond, and composer Jason Robert Brown, while writer Alfred Uhry demurs. "It's 99.9 percent certain that he didn't do it," says Uhry. "But that little niggling doubt made the play more interesting for me to write."

It took over 70 years, until 1986, for the state of Georgia to posthumously pardon Frank, based not upon the acknowledged discovery of irrefutable proof of his innocence, but because the state had failed to protect him. To this day his killers have never been brought to justice. The factory's sweeper, Jim Conley, served a year on a chain gang as an accessory to the murder, but no one else was ever convicted of killing Mary Phagan. In 1922, when a young Dutch reporter at *The Atlanta Constitution,* Pierre Van Paassen, uncovered startling evidence absolving Frank of the crime (that his dental records did not match teeth marks found on the dead girl's body), leading members of Atlanta's Jewish community begged Van Paassen's editors to cancel the series he was planning to write, fearful that it would stir up further resentments. Meanwhile, a threat from an anonymous source was made on Van Paassen's life. Shaken, he dropped the story after someone tried to kill him.

Director Michael Arden grew up Southern Baptist in Midland, Texas, home to Robert E. Lee High School. There, he says, he "was a little gay boy, dancing around on my front lawn, waving a Confederate flag, and having no idea what it meant beyond, We are proud, this is us." While preparing to direct the revival of *Parade,* he visited the site of Frank's lynching in Marietta. "There's a sad little plaque, next to a Waffle House, a burrito shop, and a freeway," he says. "I photographed the plaque, and that's the image that the audience will see when they walk in."

Taking his cue from Bertolt Brecht's concept of "the alienation effect," Arden elegantly layers in archival elements—photographs of the story's real-life characters, for example, or tabloid newsprint coverage of the case—as backdrop. "So you see Ben Platt and think, Oh, I loved him in *Dear Evan Hansen,* and then you see a picture of Leo Frank, a real man who was hanged, and you acknowledge that these two disparate elements are coming together," he says. "It's a constant reminder that this isn't just entertainment, it's also history." For Arden, the most interesting part of the story is not "whether Frank is guilty or innocent," he says. "My job is rather to interrogate the decline and dissolution of justice, because of the traumas of the past." The play's Black characters are intensely vulnerable and navigating a system bent on destroying them—Georgia was second only to

Mississippi in the lynching of its Black citizens, a chilling and grim statistic. And of course little Mary Phagan, the factory worker, was just a child.

“It was a time in which the economic stability and livelihoods of so many people were completely turned upside down,” Arden explains. “There was class hatred. They had lost an entire generation to the Civil War and then were told: You shouldn’t grieve, because you were on the wrong side of history.” The Leo Frank case represented “what of the war could still be waged. Could Leo Frank, who was from Brooklyn, be a way to show our anger about everything that had been taken from us?” So the play opens and closes with “The Old Red Hills of Home,” a lushly nostalgic ballad representing “the patriotic pride of the South,” Arden says. “It’s very stirring. But when you are listening to it and watching children waving Confederate flags, it’s very scary.”

Composer Jason Robert Brown concurs. “We make a very strong point to start the show in the Civil War,” he says, “to emphasize that the resonances of that particular time in our history are a large part of what contributed to the tragedy of Leo Frank and continue to contribute to our national divisions now.” And those divisions are still raw. This new production of *Parade* had a six-day run at New York’s City Center last November, coinciding with a moment when high-profile antisemitic incidents were cresting in the nation’s consciousness. Antisemitic comments by celebrities such as Kanye West were echoed on social media, on a highway banner in Los Angeles, in graffiti on college campuses, and elsewhere.

“In 2021 we had the highest number of antisemitic incidents that we’ve seen in almost 45 years of tallying this data,” says Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the Anti-Defamation League. We were speaking the day after someone had thrown a Molotov cocktail at a synagogue in New Jersey. “We saw almost a doubling of strongly antisemitic attitudes in this country, from 11 percent in 2019 to 20 percent in 2022”—attitudes based upon lies about Jewish greed, for example.

“*Parade* would be a piece of art worth viewing and telling regardless of its contemporary relevance,” Platt says. “But it’s just really rare to have a piece where you feel that, as an artist, you would do it no matter the context, but then as a human, it’s a story that’s important to tell, and there’s a real reason to do it now.

“There’s nothing wrong with doing a show that is just a great showcase, or funny or lighthearted, and I hope to be a part of many of those in the future,” he continues. “But *Dear Evan Hansen* was quite a moment, and getting to come back to Broadway in something where there is some real urgency about getting people to come and see it, it just feels again like a nod from the universe, that this is the right time and the right thing.” □

DEMNA ON THE RECORD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 103

This is the reason I want to change my approach, in the way I make collections and the way I show them as well, because it’s very hard to keep them apart. I focus on my collections, because that’s the emphasis [for me] on how I express myself, but when you speak about [heaviness in my work], it’s about set design, the type of shows I made. So that’s going to change as well. The show will become more about showing the collection than creating a moment. I’ve realized that that can take a lot of attention away from my actual work, which is making clothes. I want to make sure that’s what people are looking at, because I think my value as a creative is designing the product and not being a showman.

At the end of last year, the house’s Instagram account featured a montage of Cristóbal Balenciaga salon presentations from back in the day. Those were definitely about being a designer making clothes—not creating a spectacle. Do those presentations figure in your thinking?

Yes, exactly. The emphasis is on my love for the craft of making clothes now. I have already referenced that in our couture collections, but now it is going to be applied to all the rest. That is ultimately why I do what I do. My interest lies in armholes, sleeve heads, and shoulder lines, not in making seasonal campaigns, even if that is also part of my job. It was deliberate to end last year with the video edit of footage from Cristóbal Balenciaga’s collections from the ’60s, to remind our audience what this historic house stands for and where it comes from.

It was a very important video to me. Cristóbal Balenciaga’s legacy, defending it and evolving it, is the number-one reason why I am here. I am not interested in pop culture, to be very honest. Yes, we have become part of it, sort of unconsciously on my part, and it’s okay, but I cannot say that my creative vision or approach to design has been influenced by it. It came to us and not the other way.

In This Issue

Table of Contents: 18: Dress; botter.world.com. Earrings; agmesnyc.com. Manicurist: Kana Kishita. Tailor: Hailey Desjardins. **Cover Look: 18:** Jacket; ysl.com. Jeans; secondhand.levi.com. Shoes; church-footwear.com. Earrings; tiffany.com. Manicurist: Thuy Nguyen. Tailor: Susie Kourinian. **Editor’s Letter: 24:** Left photo: Cardigan and hat; maisonmargiela.com. Converse shoes; converse.com. Manicurist: Thuy Nguyen. Tailor: Susie Kourinian. Top right: On Diamond: jacket and skirt; Bergdorf Goodman. On Platt: custom suit by Giliberto Designs and custom shirt by Cego Custom Shirtmaker, both designed by Susan Hilferty. Hair, Ilker Akyol; makeup, Kuma. Grooming, Melissa Dezarate. Tailor: Zunyda Watson. **Contributors: 32:** Top left photo: hair, Ilker Akyol; makeup, Kuma. Tailor: Cha Cha Zutic. Top right photo: Bra top from Theophilio x JéBlanc by Jeniece Blanchet. Polo Ralph Lauren jeans; ralphlauren. com. Grainne Morton earrings; grainnemorton. co.uk. Hair, Joey George; makeup, Yumi Lee. Photographed at East Winds Cove, Port Antonio, Portland, Jamaica. Bottom right photo: Hair, Jimmy Paul; makeup, Dick Page. Manicurist: Kana Kishita. Tailor: Hailey Desjardins. **When Stars Collide: 34:** On Flynn: Tom Ford shirt. Paul Smith trousers. On Middleton: Raey dress; matchesfashion.com. Wolford tights. Manicurist: Ami Streets. Tailor: Birute Kelminskiene. **Flemish Masters: 52:** Jimmy Choo shoes.

BEGIN AGAIN

70–71: Cardigan and hat; maisonmargiela.com. Shoes; converse.com. **73:** Shirt and tank top; bottegaveneta.com. Jeans; Dior boutiques. Earring; tiffany.com. **74–75:** Sweater; loropiana.com. Shoes; church-footwear.com. **78–79:** Jumpsuit; stellamccartney.com for information. Manicurist: Thuy Nguyen. Tailor: Susie Kourinian.

PRACTICALLY PERFECT

81: Shoe; balenciaga.com. **82–83:** Shoes; bergdorfgoodman.com. **85:** Boots; shop.doverstreetmarket.com. **86:** Bag; select Louis Vuitton boutiques. **87:** Boots; shop.doverstreetmarket.com. **88–89:** Boots; shop.doverstreetmarket.com. **90–91:** Miu Miu dress; miumiu.com. Manicurist: Kana Kishita. Tailor: Hailey Desjardins.

FRIDA’S WORLD

92–93: Shirt and pants; proenzaschouler.com. Necklace; tiffany.com. Ring; Cartier boutiques. **95:** Blazer, shirt, skirt, and earring; driesvannoten.com. Cartier ring; Cartier boutiques. Tailor: Cha Cha Zutic.

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

96–97: On Diamond: Jacket and skirt; Bergdorf Goodman. On Platt: Custom suit by Giliberto Designs. Custom shirt by Cego Custom Shirtmaker. **98–99:** On Diamond: Coat, turtleneck, and pants; chloe.com. Prada shoes; prada.com. Repossi earring; saksfifthavenue.com. On Platt: Coat and jacket; prada.com. Calvin Klein tank top; calvinklein.us. Frame pants; frame-store.com. Converse shoes;

Can you say more about the role of pop culture in your work? From the outside it has sometimes looked like Balenciaga has positioned itself to be part of pop culture quite consciously and deliberately.
Often in my work I reference things that are somewhat mundane and easy to understand, and over time, that approach is why we've become associated with pop culture. Of course, there is also the celebrity aspect, but I have never thought about dressing celebrities or aiming my designs at them. I was quite opposed to it for a while, until the brand grew in a certain way, by which point it was inevitable.

The whole notion of pop culture is really…it is *popular*; it is appealing to many different types of people. And the branding part of pop culture was very beneficial to Balenciaga for its visibility, and consequently, obviously, for commercial success.

Now, was it beneficial to be such a part of pop culture during this crisis? I certainly think not. Being part of pop culture brings virality to any subject, so the viral aspects of that subject can end up having a massive impact.

What about your role in that landscape? Designers are now often expected to be more than just creatives—they also need to achieve a certain fame or visibility for a brand to work. You've been both highly visible in the culture—you now go by only Demna; not many of us can do that—while simultaneously trying to remove yourself from it, by wearing a mask to obscure your identity.
I've never really explained to anybody outside of Balenciaga, outside my close friends, why I wanted to change my name professionally, to just go by Demna. For me, to lead a house, especially a heritage house like Balenciaga, the main thing that is required is to have a creative vision.

I certainly do not think it requires a celebrity face or celebrity image from a designer. My wearing a mask and not wanting to be seen, and the name situation, all indicates how uncomfortable I was feeling with something that is part of my job. I work at a global brand for which I have a vision, and I think part of my job is to be associated with that vision.

Yet at the same time I am a person; a person who has complexes and feelings; a person who has had many issues with my name, and I have been trying to find ways to make it easier for myself this past year. So, covering my face meant I wouldn't need to care about how I look in pictures, or on the internet, or at The Met. It wasn't hiding behind [a mask]; it was to make it easier to deal with the spotlight that comes with the job that I do.

I never looked for that [spotlight]; it was something I had to get used to, to learn how to deal with by myself. When a vision for the brand is there, the person behind the vision is put in the spotlight, and willingly—or unwillingly—becomes part of celebrity culture in some way. It is part of my job, but I don't feel part of it. That's something that I've not really managed to communicate in the right way, because everybody wants to be a celebrity, but I am an introvert who actually just wants to be in my atelier.

What concerns my decision to go by my first name is a really personal, and somehow artistic choice, as well. Sixty percent of the time [my surname] was either said or spelled the wrong way, and I had a bit of a problem with that, and it was associated with my previous project [Vetements]. I wanted to detach myself from my past career, and just present myself as Demna.

How does the return to emphasizing the craft of creating clothes factor into what you will show and how you will show?
The set [for the March show was] intentionally simple, to really bring attention to the collection. I am leaving it to the essentials: collection, sound, light. I am excited about that. That's more in line with who I am, who I am becoming, evolving into. And it also corresponds much closer to the heritage of this house. We'll show a lot of clothes, clothes that involve a lot of work.

Can you expand on what the collection looks like?
It's an evolution. When I work on couture, there is a very direct link to the heritage and to Cristóbal's work, which has not been translated enough to the ready-to-wear yet. And I think the March collection [had] a lot of those elements. There [are] three parts: One part is based on tailoring and a lot of experimentation with that, cutting, deconstructing, and reconstructing, which is my base in dressmaking. There [is] another part where the work is on silhouette and really more fashion orientated, very, like, *shape.* And in the third part, which I feel is most connected to the heritage of the house, not so much the couture, as I don't want to have this overlap, but in the way I see modern elegance. There [are] things we don't really do much in our ready-to-wear shows, for sure. □

converse.com. Tailor: Zunyda Watson.

SHOW OF STRENGTH
108: Hanro tank top; shop.hanrousa.com. Loewe briefs; loewe.com for information. Manicurist: Yoko Sakakura.

ETERNAL SUNSHINE
110: Earring; leighmiller.us. **113:** Dries Van Noten shoe; driesvannoten.com. **114:** On González: sandals; Hermès boutiques. Agmes earrings; agmesnyc.com. On Newman: sandals; Hermès boutiques. Leigh Miller earrings; leighmiller.us. **115:** Shoes; ullajohnson.com. Earring; leighmiller.us. **116:** Necklace; marcopanconesi.com for similar styles. **117:** Earring; marcopanconesi.com for similar styles. Manicurist: Kana Kishita. Tailor: Hailey Desjardins.

JUST ONE THING
122: '47 cap; 47brand.com. **123:** Ring; contact@anakhouri.com. **124:** Shoes; drmartens.com. Falke socks; falke.com. Ana Khouri ear cuffs; contact@anakhouri.com. **125:** Bag; jimmychoo.com. Tailor: Cha Cha Zutic.

THE GET
126–127: **2.** Necklace, $3,500. **3.** Bomber Coat, $2,640. **5.** Watch, $5,800. **7.** Pants, $2,795. **9.** Earrings, $5,500. **10.** Jacket, $3,025. **12.** Bag, $2,790.

LAST LOOK
132: Shoe; bottegaveneta.com.

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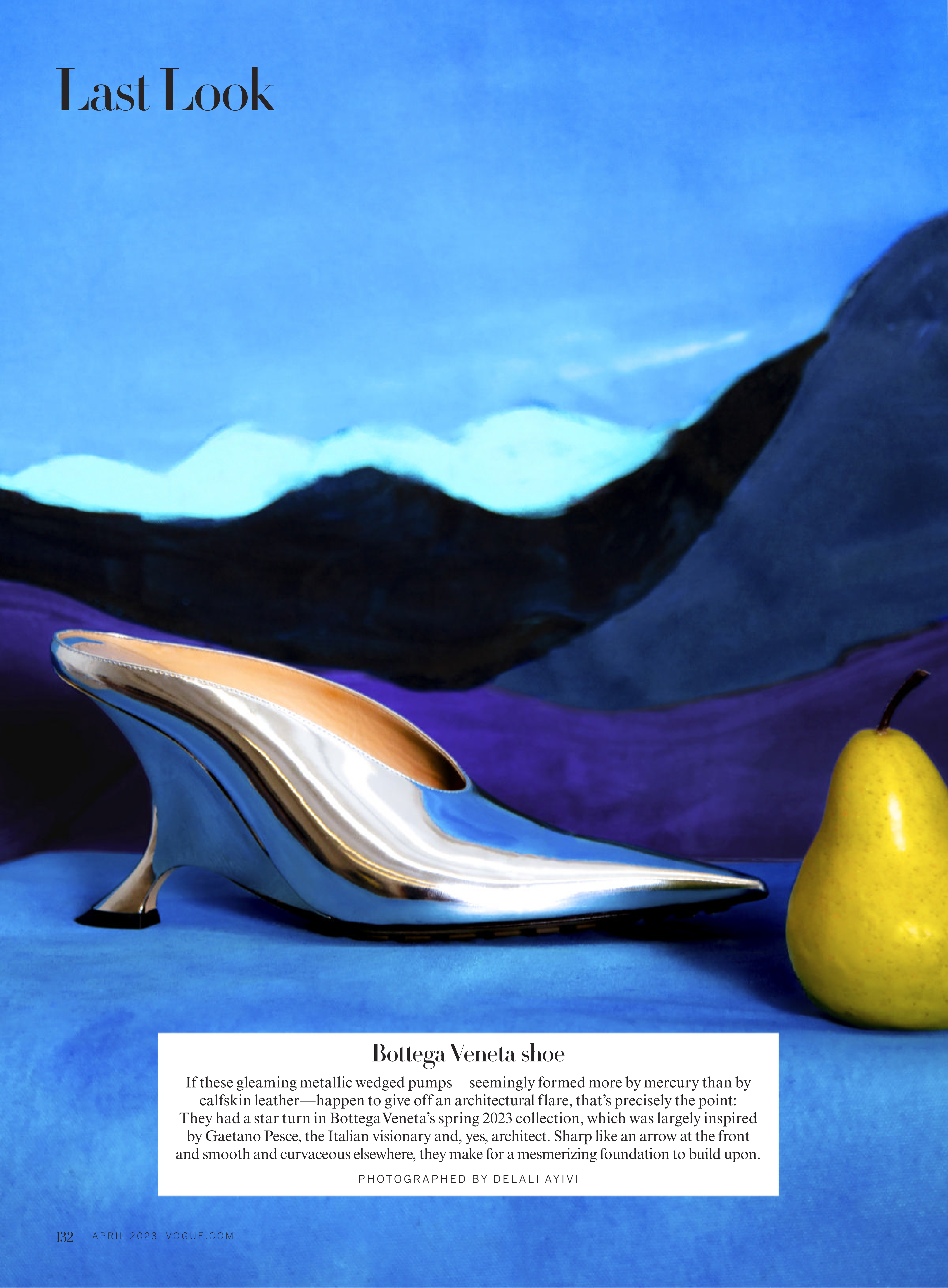
Last Look



Bottega Veneta shoe

If these gleaming metallic wedged pumps—seemingly formed more by mercury than by calfskin leather—happen to give off an architectural flare, that's precisely the point: They had a star turn in Bottega Veneta's spring 2023 collection, which was largely inspired by Gaetano Pesce, the Italian visionary and, yes, architect. Sharp like an arrow at the front and smooth and curvaceous elsewhere, they make for a mesmerizing foundation to build upon.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DELALI AYIVI

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